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Riyadh issues identikit of bomber

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi authorities on Sunday issued an identikit picture of one of the people suspected of blowing up a U.S. military building here in an attack that killed seven people. They called on the public to help trace the suspect as the composite sketch of a man with moustache, regular features and black hair, aged between 30 and 40 was shown on Saudi television. The identikit was assembled with the help of a witness who saw two men in a van parked at the site of the car-bomb blast on Nov. 13 outside the U.S. military building for training the Saudi National Guard, the Interior Ministry said. The witness said the man, sitting next to the driver, was wearing a red checkered shirt and trousers, rather than the traditional Saudi long white robe. The two suspects left the van just minutes before the blast. The Interior Ministry, quoted by the official news agency SPA, said the vehicle believed to have been used for the attack was a white 1981 Mitsubishi van.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Volume 21 Number 6983

AMMAN MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1995, RAJAB 5, 1416

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Israel 'awaiting' Syrian reply to Rabin's queries

Peres says he is ready to resume talks, but a meeting with Assad is necessary

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Syria has failed to respond to Israeli peace proposals delivered by the United States through Yitzhak Rabin before he was assassinated, Prime Minister Shimon Peres said Sunday. "We have not received any reply to the questions put to Damascus by Yitzhak Rabin through the intermediary of the United States," Mr. Peres told his first cabinet meeting since taking office on Thursday, his office said. In an interview in the latest edition of U.S. News and World Report, Mr. Peres stressed he did not know what concessions Syria was prepared to make in return for an Israeli withdrawal on the Golan Heights. Israel has never outlined a timetable and scope of any withdrawal from the Heights, demanding that Damascus first accept the principle of a full peace and normalisation of relations. "We know what Syria wants — the Golan Heights. But we don't know the price it is willing to pay," Mr. Peres told U.S. News and World Report. "We've had peace with Egypt all these years, but it didn't fully develop the way we thought. This means economic and diplomatic (ties), water and tourism," he said. Mr. Peres said it was "essential" that he meet with the Syrian leader. "It should not be secret, but it could have secret parts," he added. Asked about the assassination of his predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, by a Jew opposed to the peace process, Mr. Peres acknowledged that "we did not calculate the depth and intensity of this opposition." "But we will pick up the pieces. A very large majority of the public wants to ensure that nothing like this can ever happen again," he said. President Ezer Weizman said Sunday he hoped new Foreign Minister Ehud Barak would meet his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Sharaa at the European Mediterranean conference set to open in Barcelona on Monday. So far such a meeting has been ruled out by Israeli officials (see page 2). "But a meeting would improve the chances of relaunching the peace negotiations between Israel and Syria," which broke down in June, the president said during a tour of the Golan.



His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the Regent, on Sunday holds talks with the deputy chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William A. Owens, in a meeting attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley Egan (Petra photo)

Regent, Adm. Owens discuss Jordanian-U.S. military ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the Regent, on Sunday received the vice-chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William A. Owens, in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein. The Regent reviewed with Adm. Owens Jordanian-U.S. relations, particularly in military affairs. The meeting was attended by U.S. Ambassador Wesley Egan. Adm. Owens arrived here on Saturday on a two-day visit to Jordan as part of a regional tour. Before his departure on Sunday, Adm. Owens met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Abdul Hafez Mirai and reviewed with him the situation in the region and the region's strategic importance in addition to scopes of bilateral cooperation. Adm. Owens is one of several senior U.S. officials over the past months to visit the Kingdom, which has secured a pledge from the Clinton administration for military aid and training to upgrade its armed forces. Jordan is seeking advanced jet fighters, tanks, troop carriers, guns and equipment.

PNA police in Nablus dispute

NABLUS, Occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Ten Palestinian police officers arrived here on Sunday ahead of an Israeli army withdrawal from the West Bank town, but immediately found themselves at the centre of a dispute. Israeli officers demanded that the Palestinians set up an Israeli army base close to the village of Barka, three kilometres south of Nablus. But the Palestinian police refused, saying they were supposed to be housed with the liaison committee near the village of Howwara, five kilometres south of Nablus. Israeli army leaders and the head of the Palestinian police on the West Bank, General Hajj Ismail Jaber, held talks to try to find a compromise. Brigadier General Ziad Al Atrash, head of the Palestinian military coordination committee, said: "According to the agreement, the DCO headquarters should be in Howwara parallel to the main road but the buildings that have been set up by the Israelis were in a different location, parallel to the Israeli army camp and this is a violation of the agreement." "I am not authorised to take over the headquarters in this location, I suggest setting up tents at the agreed location in Howwara. The leadership has been informed about the problem and it will take the right decision," he added. Colonel Moshe Eliad, an Israeli security official in Nablus, told reporters the two sides were holding talks to resolve the matter. The Palestinian police, dressed in olive green military uniforms and armed with pistols, arrived from the self-rule enclave of Jericho on board seven police vehicles in the town of 100,000 residents. They are due to work with the Israelis in the joint Israeli-Palestinian liaison committee to prepare for the deployment of the Palestinian police. The Israeli army is to withdraw from Nablus by mid-December as part of the September autonomy accord to extend Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank. A total of six Palestinian towns are to be evacuated by the end of the year to allow elections to go ahead on Jan. 20. Preparations have already begun for the withdrawal from Nablus. On Thursday about 130 border guards left the town, transferring to the nearby settlement of Ariel. They followed in the footsteps of the Israeli police, who left on Nov. 16 and handed over the police station to the army's control. The daily Haaretz said the army would begin to leave Nablus on Dec. 14 and complete the task two days later. Israel has already handed Jenin, in the north of the West Bank, to the Palestinians on Nov. 12. "Troops will also begin to withdraw from Kalqilya, Tulkarm and Bethlehem on Dec. 18, while Ramallah will follow on Dec. 31. Some bases in the Hebron area will also be evacuated on December 31."

Hamas softens its tone

GAZA (R) — The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas said on Sunday its relations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) were improving and both sides were preparing for a reconciliation dialogue. Hamas's new softened position contradicted a statement issued by the group on Saturday in which it accused the PNA of jeopardising reconciliation discussions to be held in Egypt soon by continuing to detain Hamas activists. The movement's new stance reflected a division in Hamas' position towards the dialogue, which would tackle relations between the PNA and the opposition. Hamas official Mahmoud Al Zahar said: "Relations with the Palestinian Authority are witnessing progress and moving towards a constructive dialogue." In what appeared to be a rebuttal of Saturday's Hamas statement, Dr. Zahar called on the PNA "to refrain from listening to those who try to divide and fight reconciliation among the Palestinian people." On Saturday, Hamas, a violent opponent of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) self-rule deal, said the PLO's continued arrest and torture of the group's leaders and activists was jeopardising the reconciliation dialogue. The PLO accused Hamas of using the prisoners as an

Partnerships, joint strategies on centre-stage at Barcelona

From Ghaila Alul in Barcelona
PRELIMINARY MEETINGS continued here Sunday to finalise the documents for the 28 foreign ministers who will meet today to discuss the future of relations between the European Union (EU) and its partners in the Mediterranean basin. The Euro-Mediterranean conference, which will take place today and tomorrow, is the first high-level meeting of officials of the 15 EU member states and 12 Mediterranean governments to discuss common partnership agreements and the eventual creation of the world's largest free trade area by the year 2010. The aim of the Barcelona conference is to establish a specific action programme in order to meet these objectives. The primary emphasis is on strengthening economic cooperation between non-EU-Mediterranean states as well as on extending earlier bilateral accords with the EU, with a view to reducing economic imbalances between the northern and southern states within the Mediterranean region. The EU has already pledged \$6 billion in development assistance and credits to the region over the next five years. Northern and southern states are seeking to join forces to turn the Mediterranean into a zone of peace, stability, prosperity and cooperation. Finding cooperative means to combat violence, terrorism, extremism and other sources of instability will also be a subject addressed by the conference. Terrorism as a factor of destabilisation in the Mediterranean region is a concern of Arab governments as much as European at this conference. According to the Spanish news agency EFE, Tunisian minister of foreign affairs, Habib Ben Yahia, is amongst

U.S.: Bosnia deal is final

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The chief U.S. Balkan negotiator ruled out on Sunday any change in the Bosnia peace agreement initiated last week in order to suit Bosnian Serbs angered by the loss of Serb parts of Sarajevo. "Dayton was an initiative. There will be no change between Dayton and Paris," the negotiator, Richard Holbrooke, said in an interview on the NBC programme "Meet the Press." Mr. Holbrooke, speaking from Telluride, Colorado, played down the possible danger from rogue Serbian forces to the projected 60,000-strong NATO-led peacekeeping force, which would include 20,000 U.S. troops. Taking issue with an NBC correspondent's estimate that there may be as many as 180,000 armed Bosnian Serb forces on the ground, he said: "Our intelligence would put them at a third to a quarter of that size." "Secondly, the rogue element factor is hard to assess, but I do not think it is that great," Mr. Holbrooke added. The peace agreement reached by the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian presidents in Dayton, Ohio, on Nov. 21 is expected to be signed in Paris in mid-December. In Pale, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said Sunday that his army will hold its ground in Sarajevo and warned that Western soldiers would die if an attempt were made to arrest him to face trial for war crimes. "Until a different and better solution than that provided by the Dayton peace accords is found for the Serb

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8 light aftershocks felt in Aqaba region

AMMAN (J.T.) — Eight light aftershocks registering between 2.5 and 4 on the Richter scale were recorded in Aqaba Sunday, Mohammad Dawoud Fandi of the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) said. In an interview with Jordan Television (JTV), Mr. Fandi, a geophysicist, said such aftershocks were normal following any major earthquake like the one that hit the southern port city of Aqaba and other parts in south Jordan on Wednesday. Mr. Fandi said seismological monitoring equipment showed a decline in the scale and time span between the aftershocks. It is a good indicator, he added. Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Fayez Khasawneh, who is also acting Aqaba governor, has decided to set up an ad hoc technical committee to assess the damage to buildings caused by Wednesday's earthquake, which measured 6.2 on the Richter scale, and the aftershocks. The committee groups representatives of the governorate office, Aqaba Municipality, the ARA, the Civil Defence Department and the Ministry of Public Works. Mr. Khasawneh urged citizens to cooperate with the civil defence teams and to guide them to the buildings which have cracked. His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday received a cable from King Hassan II of Morocco expressing concern for the earthquake. King Hassan expressed his sympathy and that of the Moroccan people with the Jordanian people over the quake.

Rebel jets hit Kabul, kill 39

KABUL (Agencies) — Rebel jets bombed residential areas of Kabul on Sunday, killing at least 39 people and wounding more than 140 in the heaviest air raid on the besieged Afghan capital in more than a year. A Defence Ministry spokesman blamed rebel Islamic Taliban militia, who seek to topple President Burhanuddin Rabbani, for the 9.30 a.m. (0500 GMT) attack. At least nine bombs were dropped by SU-22 planes, none hitting a military target, he said. A ministry statement also accused neighbouring Pakistan of responsibility, saying it had "strong evidence" indicating Islamabad's technical and financial aid in repairing the SU-type jets the Taliban seized from the western town of Herat in August. Pakistan rejected the charge, saying it had given no such assistance. "This is utter nonsense," said a Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman in Islamabad. "The Taliban used three SU-22 bombers for the 9.30 a.m. (0500 GMT) attack. At least nine bombs were dropped by SU-22 planes, none hitting a military target, he said. Thirteen children were among the dead, including an eight-month-old baby boy who died of his injuries.

Two rabbis questioned in Rabin killing probe

PETAH TIKVA, Israel (Agencies) — Police on Sunday widened their investigation into the killing of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a religious Jew, calling in rabbis for questioning for the first time. "God forbid," said Rabbi Shmuel Dvir, 27, one of two rabbis questioned for more than six hours, when reporters asked if he had issued a ritual ruling condemning Mr. Rabin to death for handing over land to Palestinians. White-bearded Rabbi David Kav sidestepped reporters' questions about whether he knew confessed assassin Yigal Amir. "Don't say a word," his wife said in Yiddish as they entered the police station in Petah Tikva, central Israel. Army radio said the man was a rabbi at a religious seminary which the killer attended. Israel cabinet minister Rabbi Yehuda Amital told the radio he knew Rabbi Dvir, a settler from the Gush Etzion bloc in the West Bank. "He was known for being strange, a little weird and radical in his opinions," said Mr. Amital, a rabbi of the religious dovish Meimad movement. It was not immediately clear why police called rabbis Dvir and Kav first. Israel's

Iraq demands a deadline for U.N. inspections

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq on Sunday urged senior U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus to set a quick deadline for his team to finish its work on dismantling Iraq and recommend a lifting of economic sanctions. Mr. Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), is expected in Baghdad on Monday to check Iraq's claims it has destroyed its weapons of mass destruction amid suspicion it has been withholding information. "A deadline must be set for ending the mission to investigate disarmament and this period must be short," Iraq's foreign minister, Mohammad Al Sahaf, told AFP in an interview in Baghdad. "We urge UNSCOM and Mr. Ekeus to set a time limit for the end of their mission, because any waste of time is unjustifiable. The procedures to verify information given by Iraq on its prohibited weapons do not need much time." Iraq had previously issued an ultimatum for UNSCOM to complete its work by Aug. 31, but withdrew it after President Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, and weapons mastermind, Hussein Kamel Hassan, defected to Jordan. Following the defection, Iraq disclosed a large amount of information about its weapons programmes which UNSCOM still has to verify. Mr. Sahaf repeated his country's determination to "cooperate fully and objectively" with U.N. officials on implementing Security Council Resolution 687. Under the resolution ending the 1991 Gulf war to free Kuwait, Iraq must destroy its nuclear, biological, chemical and longer-range ballistic weapons and hand over all details about them before the oil embargo can be lifted. Oil and trade sanctions were imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Mr. Ekeus, who has been touring Arab Gulf states partly to raise funds for UNSCOM, is preparing his December report on Iraq's disarmament for the Security Council, which decides whether to maintain or lift the embargo. Baghdad has declared the "weapons were destroyed secretly as they were produced secretly... However, we have no proof that these weapons have been destroyed," he said. Mr. Ekeus accuses Baghdad of hiding part of its germ warfare and chemical weapons arsenal as well as resuming imports of equipment to make missiles but without informing U.N. experts. At its regular review earlier this month, the Security Council maintained sanctions after Mr. Ekeus issued a report in October accusing Baghdad of hiding information. Meanwhile, Iraq published on Saturday a long list of weapons and material used to make the arms which it said had been destroyed (see page 2). It also said its germ warfare programme had been only for defensive reasons, even though Mr. Ekeus said in July that Iraq had for the first time admitted it was for offensive purposes. U.S. and other officials say Iraq has damaged its credibility by repeatedly hiding the scope of its weapons programmes. Mr. Sahaf said Mr. Ekeus, on his first visit here since September, "must be neutral and objective to make his

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Euro-Med ties are necessary, Syria affirms

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria is praising the Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona, where it will make a rare appearance alongside Israel at an international meeting.

"Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is a common need and it serves the interests of all the parties concerned in that it will promote security and stability and give a push to the economy," the government daily Tishrin said Saturday.

The European Union (EU) is offering \$12 billion, half in aid and the rest in loans, to finance projects with its 12 Mediterranean partners.

An EU diplomat in Damascus said that loans and aid to Syria depended on the "degree of its opening to a market economy and the negotiation of an accord of association" with the EU.

The diplomat added that Syria faces a "major challenge" to restructure its economy in time for the creation of a free trade zone around the Mediterranean by the 2010 — a primary goal of the conference.

Syria is being prudent and wants to "study" the EU association accord, which would require an acceleration of its economic reforms, the same source said.

For the first time since the 1975-90 Lebanese civil war, Syria will attend an international conference attended by Israel, with which it is technically at war.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks ground to a halt several months ago over security arrangements after an Israeli withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights, which the Jewish state seized from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war.

Syrian officials also have been carefully making distinctions between the Barcelona conference and Mideast economic summits in Amman and Casablanca, which Damascus boycotted because of Israeli participation.

"The goal of these meetings were to normalise relations with Israel and assure the success of Zionist aims to create a new Middle East, (compared to) Barcelona, which is being organised by the European Union with different objectives," Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam explained recently.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa will attend the conference in Barcelona starting Monday along with his Israeli counterpart, Yehud Barak. But no meetings between the two ministers have been scheduled, with Syria saying that such talks would be fruitless until a peace agreement is concluded with Israel.

The Barcelona conference, Mr. Sharaa said, "is in the interest of all the countries concerned, who participate on an equal footing."

The conference, according to Tishrin, "will establish a common security based on non-violence, respect for national sovereignty, resolving differences through peaceful means and the prohibition of nuclear arms proliferation."

"This security will be based on international law, including that which prohibits the occupation of territory by force, and thus the establishment of a just and global peace returning all Arab territories occupied" by Israel, the newspaper said.



SOUK AL AHAD: An old Armenian man hopes to earn a few dollars at Beirut's Souk al Ahad open-air Sunday market, displaying an assortment of used ware. The market, which spread over 5,000 square metres, sprouted up during the 1975-90 Lebanese civil war when impoverished Lebanese sought an alternative to earn money (AFP photo)

Common security policy difficult to achieve in Euro-Med dialogue

NICOSIA (AFP) — Middle Eastern countries appear far from agreeing to a common political and security policy — a goal of the Euro-Mediterranean conference starting Monday in Barcelona.

The diversity of the 27 countries participating in the conference threatens to minimise the effectiveness of any security partnership in the Mediterranean region, which is being strongly backed by the European Union.

The two-day conference includes the 15 members of the EU, eight Arab countries and representatives from Cyprus, Israel, Malta, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority.

According to a draft declaration to be presented at the conference that was obtained by AFP, the participants would agree to work against the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and reinforce their cooperation against terrorism and toward the promotion of human rights.

However, Algeria is in the throws of a civil war that has caused thousands of deaths over the last four years. Israel and Syria, which engaged in peace talks in 1991, are still technically at war and negotiations have ground to a halt.

The Egyptian government, the target of Islamic violence, wants to improve international cooperation in the fight against "terrorism," but says the Euro-Med conference declaration "speaks too much of human rights," according to Nabil Fahmy, a political advisor at the Egyptian foreign ministry.

Israel, which has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, "will not modify its position at Barcelona," a senior Israeli foreign ministry official told AFP.

"Israel is ready to envision the setup of a regional security structure to control the biological, chemical and nuclear arms, on condition that Arab countries in the region, from Morocco to Iran, are at peace with us," the official said, requesting anonymity.

Egypt, however, has called for a paragraph in the declaration "calling for the creation of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction."

"There is no reason that Israel should refuse such a statement, which would be general and non-constraining," Mr. Fahmy said.

Although the declaration calls for "reinforcing cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism," Syria's foreign minister, Farouk Al Sharaa, recently told the

Sentence reduced in Kuwait murder case

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's appeal court has cut 20 months off a five-year prison sentence which was passed against a Kuwaiti woman for beating her Filipina maid to death, lawyers said on Sunday.

"The court (of appeal) last week reduced the sentence issued against Janet Shamoun to three years and four months to be followed by deportation," a lawyer told Reuters.

Ms. Shamoun, who is of Iraqi origin, appealed the criminal court ruling in September sentencing her to five years in prison and deportation.

The family of the victim, 24-year-old Margaret Almogela from Manila in the Philippines province of Pangasinan, have accepted \$56,000 in so-called "blood money" from Ms. Shamoun's family to drop a private prosecution, officials have said.

According to the principles of Islam, a victim's family has the option of accepting blood money instead of prosecution.

Lawyers said the payment had no bearing on the state prosecution's case against Ms. Shamoun, aged 35.

Almogela, who had been in Kuwait only three months when she died in June 1995, had been illegally recruited to work in the oil-rich Gulf country.

Manila has banned Filipinas from taking domestic jobs in Kuwait for several years, but there is a steady influx of maids due to a corrupt trade in visas conducted by employment agents both in Manila and Kuwait, diplomats say.

She was beaten over much of her body including her thighs, breasts and head, embassy statements said in June.

"My madame wants to kill me... I'm always being beaten," Kuwait's Arab Times quoted her as saying on her deathbed.

A lawyer familiar with the case has said: "A photograph of the victim shows marks of heavy beating. You would not believe that it is a picture of a human being."

Israel, Syria ministers set for first encounter since Madrid meeting

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli and Syrian ministers will come face to face for the first time in four years at the Barcelona conference, but officials have ruled out hopes of a breakthrough in their deadlocked peace talks.

Despite signals from both sides in past weeks that they are keen to resume talks, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres is still not ready to play all his cards.

Instead, he is banking on talks at the White House due on Dec. 11 with U.S. President Bill Clinton, when he will unveil a detailed plan of the price Israel expects to pay for peace with Syria, and what it wants in return.

He will also urge Mr. Clinton to try to arrange direct talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad as "the only way forward," said Israel's ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich.

Mr. Peres will not attend the two-day Euro-Mediterranean conference, which opens on Monday in Barcelona with ministers from 26 countries plus the Palestinian National Authority.

Instead, he will be represented by Israel's new foreign minister, Ehud Barak, who may meet Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat for the first time and hold a series of talks with his Arab counterparts. However, Mr. Barak's exact itinerary has yet to be confirmed, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

A meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa is also not on the agenda so far.

On his first day in his post on Thursday, Mr. Barak took a headline stand vowing that Israel must never give up large swathes of the occupied West Bank where there are groups of Jewish settlements.

He took the same tough line in December 1994 when as chief staff he met with his Syrian counterpart Hikmat Shehawi to try to hammer out security arrangements for an eventual Israeli withdrawal on the Golan Heights.

Mr. Peres has appealed to Damascus several times since the murder of his predecessor Yitzhak Rabin on Nov. 4 to break down the barriers between them, maintaining it was hard to make peace with a "stranger."

In turn, Syria has demanded he turn his words of peace into action.

For the first time since the peace process was launched in Madrid in 1991, Syrian and Israeli ministers will find themselves around the same table at the Barcelona meeting.

However, preparatory talks leading up to the summit gave senior foreign ministry officials the chance to meet in Brussels last week. Israel's Eytan Ben-Tzur and Syria's Rafik Joujait held about 45 minutes of talks.

"The Syrians have not dropped their demands but we saw an interesting change in their tactics and a less aggressive tone, for they understand that they have to cooperate with Israel to benefit from the economic development," said Mr. Ben-Tzur.

Mr. Rabinovich said the Americans "had welcomed the encouraging and positive climate in Brussels."

Dennis Ross, the U.S. State Department's Middle East coordinator, is due next week on another shuttle between Israel and Syria, taking up past efforts by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Mr. Peres has called on Syria to return unconditionally to the negotiations to discuss the full range of issues surrounding an eventual peace treaty, including a withdrawal from the Golan, a normalisation of ties, sharing water resources and security arrangements.

Pope hopes synod will help Lebanese peace

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul presided on Sunday at a solemn mass, with chanting in Armenian, Arabic, Greek and French, to open a synod of the Catholic Church in Lebanon and said he hoped it would help consolidate peace there.

"We trust the work of the synod can offer a valuable contribution to your homeland, which has been so harshly put to trial during the past decades and can foster the process towards real solid peace," the 75-year-old Pope said in his homily.

The synod which ends on Dec. 14 will discuss how the once-dominant Christians, who emerged vulnerable from the 1975-1990 civil war which was fought along religious lines, can help solve the religious and political problems of the country.

About 100 patriarchs, bishops and clergy will meet daily to discuss the role of the Catholic Church in Lebanon, which has the largest Christian population in the Middle East.

At the opening ceremony the languages of the various Lebanese Christian denominations in unity with Rome wafted through St. Peter's Basilica, the largest in Christendom.

The Pope, who had to cancel a planned visit to Lebanon in 1994 for security reasons after the bombing of a Beirut church killed 11 people, feels strongly about the role churches can play in the Middle East.

Multi-confessional Lebanon is a religious microcosm of the region because it is made up of 12 Christian denominations, five Muslim communities and Jews.

A 105-page working document prepared for the synod says it was high time the country moved on definitively from a climate of conflict to a spirit of constructive reconciliation.

It said continued inter-religious dialogue among Christians and Muslims would be essential for the consolidation of peace.

It also urged Lebanese Christians who left the country during the war to return to help contribute to lasting peace. As many as 800,000 Christians left during the war, according to the Catholic almanac.

The synod's working document, in a clear reference to Syria, laments that because of Lebanon's strategic position it is subject to "political pressure that many of its citizens see as direct attacks on its independence and freedom."

All post-war government have been backed by Syria, which has 35,000 soldiers in Lebanon and is the main powerbroker.

Many Christians feel they have been shoved aside since the civil war and question Syria's motives.

Medicine woman may quit Jericho

JERUSALEM (R) — An 83-year-old Israeli woman who runs a laboratory in Palestinian-ruled Jericho said on Sunday if she was forced to relocate she would abandon her life's work of making medicine out of papayas.

Rose Bilboul said Palestinian officials had offered to find her a new plot of land since her Amman-based landlord decided to claim the property but she felt too old to make a fresh start.

"They don't want to renew the contract of the house, they don't want to renew the contract of the field, they cut the water supply," she told Reuters.

Sabb Erakat, a Jericho-based member of the Palestinian National Authority who knows Ms. Bilboul from her years of work in the town, said he tried to help her.

"President (Yasser) Arafat was informed of Rose's case and he immediately instructed me to find her five dunums with water to live on," he told Reuters.

"It is totally unfair to say that the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) is evicting Rose. She was never one of us and we loved her and treated her as a lady of peace and we want her to stay with us. We are now in the process of finding her five dunums to stay."

But Ms. Bilboul felt the offer was impractical.

"At my age I cannot make new starts," she said. "I need two years to finish a very important experiment. Then I'll be 85 and won't want to work any more."

The Hungarian-born chemist, who lost most of her family in the Nazi Holocaust, began working in Jericho in the 1940s under British rule. She spent 23 years in Beirut, then moved to Jerusalem and resumed her work in Jericho in the 1970s.

She has been studying the papaya, which she calls a "miracle drug" for decades and believes the intense sunlight and low humidity of Jericho make it the best place in the world to grow the fruit.

She produces tablets for stomach ailments as well as shampoo, body and hand cream. She says she is in the midst of an attempt to produce a tonic resembling digitalis, a heart medicine.

Iraq presents list of destroyed weapons

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq published on Saturday a long and detailed list of weapons it claimed to have destroyed to satisfy all U.N. requirements and called for lifting the crippling economic embargo against it.

The inventory of destroyed nuclear, biological and chemical weapons was announced shortly before the arrival here Monday of Rolf Ekeus, head of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) on dismantling Iraq's weapons.

"Iraq has satisfied all its obligations under Clause J of U.N. resolution 687," the official INA news agency said.

In the nuclear area, Iraq has destroyed 450 machines and equipment, 4,000 tonnes of metallic products and 1,100 tonnes of lead minerals, as well as a 50,000 square metre (540,000 square foot) factory, the news agency said.

It added that Iraq had "obtained in Russia 280 containers of nuclear combustible materials."

Iraq said it also destroyed 75 chemical warheads, 8,000 chemical bombs for plans and 7,000 chemical artillery shells. Another 13,000 pieces of artillery were destroyed, along with three million litres of compounds used to create chemical agents and 500,000 litres of actual chemical agents as well as several production factories, the agency said.

Five hundred machines and pieces of equipment used in the production of chemical agents were also eliminated, the agency said.

As for Iraq's suspected biological weapons programme, INA said it was started in 1986 for "uniquely defensive reasons but was destroyed in 1990."

It added that the biological "factory in the Al-Selman region was completely destroyed in the (Gulf) war" between January and February 1991.

Other weapons destroyed include 140 Scud missiles, 18 mobile launchers, 40 fixed launchers, 15 factories to build warheads and more than 150 machines and pieces of equipment used in weapons production, the news agency said.

"It's all that Iraq had in this domain," the news agency said, referring to ballistic missiles.

Mr. Ekeus will make another inspection of Iraq's disarmament progress before completing his December report to the U.N. Security Council, which will determine whether to lift sanctions placed on Iraq when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

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PROGRAMME TWO

- 14:00 Shelly Duvall's Bedtime Stories
- 14:30 Playhouse
- 14:45 Hey Day
- 15:00 Doc - Nature World of Mitsuabi
- 16:00 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
- 16:30 Sky Trainers
- 17:00 Children's programme - Fractale
- 17:30 Serie - Madame Le Proviseur
- 18:00 News in French
- 19:15 Magazine - Nimbus
- 19:30 News Headlines
- 19:35 Mc Hale's Navy
- 20:00 Inventions
- 20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
- 21:00 Star Trek
- 22:00 News in English
- 22:25 Inspector Morse
- 22:55 The American Chart Show

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:48 Fajr
- 06:09 (Sunrise) Duha
- 11:23 Dhuhir
- 14:13 'Asr
- 16:36 Maghrib
- 17:58 'Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Sweidat, Tel. 810740
- Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 63785
- St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590
- Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 637440
- De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757
- Terrassane Church, Tel. 623366
- Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 623541
- Anglican Church, Tel. 652326
- Armenian Catholic Church, Tel. 773201
- Armenian Orthodox Church, Tel. 773201
- St. Ephraim Church, Tel. 771751
- Armenian International Church, Tel. 652526
- Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tel. 634329
- German-speaking Evangelical Congregation, Tel. 645457
- The Latter-Day Saints, Tel. 604932
- Church of Nazareth, Tel. 675691
- The Evangelical Local Church in Amman, Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be sunny with temperatures rising slightly but remaining below average with winds easterly

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- AMMAN: Dr. Hisham Kan'an 740206
- Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 649028
- Dr. Hanna Mansour 780197
- Dr. Issam Al Asmar 891508
- Firas pharmacy 661912
- Ferdous pharmacy 770336
- Al Asma pharmacy 637855
- Al Salam pharmacy 636734
- Yacoub pharmacy 644945
- Shmiesam pharmacy 637660
- Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
- Abdallah telephone repairs 661101
- Jordan Television 773111
- Radio Jordan 774111
- Water Authority 680100
- Najib pharmacy 847632

NIGHT DUTY

- AMMAN: Dr. Hisham Kan'an 740206
- Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 649028
- Dr. Hanna Mansour 780197
- Dr. Issam Al Asmar 891508
- Firas pharmacy 661912
- Ferdous pharmacy 770336
- Al Asma pharmacy 637855
- Al Salam pharmacy 636734
- Yacoub pharmacy 644945
- Shmiesam pharmacy 637660
- Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
- Abdallah telephone repairs 661101
- Jordan Television 773111
- Radio Jordan 774111
- Water Authority 680100
- Najib pharmacy 847632

EMERGENCIES

- Food Control Centre 637111
- Civil Defence Department 661111
- Civil Defence Emergency 630341
- Rescue Police 192 621111
- Fire Brigade 617101
- Blood Bank 775121
- Highway Police 843012
- Traffic Police 896340
- Public Security Department 630321
- Hotel Complaints 602800
- Price Complaints 661176
- Water and Sewerage 897467
- Complaints 897467
- Amman Municipality 787111
- Telephone Information 121
- Overseas Calls 6116230
- Central Amman Telephone 623101
- Repairs 661101
- Abdallah Telephone Repairs 661101
- Jordan Television 773111
- Radio Jordan 774111
- Water Authority 680100
- Jordan Electricity Authority 680100

HOSPITALS

- AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
- Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 64428116
- Aklich Maternity, J. Amn 64244112
- Jahat Amman Maternity 642362
- Malhas, J. Amman 636140
- Palestine, Shmiesam 607071
- Shmiesam Hospital 669131
- University Hospital 85845
- Al-Musasher Hospital 6672279
- The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
- Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164n
- Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771012
- Al-Basit, J. Ashrafieh 77511128
- Army, Metka 89161115
- Queen Alia Hospital 66224050
- Amal Hospital 674155
- The Arab Center for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
- ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)943323
- Zarqa National Hospital (09)905650
- Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
- Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)98994
- Irbid: Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

FOR THE TRAVELLER

- QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
- This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)532000, 5, where it should always be verified.
- ARRIVALS
- Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
- 07:20 Beirut (RJ)
- 08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
- 09:00 Amman (RJ)
- 09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
- 09:55 Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
- 10:25 Beirut (RJ)
- 10:50 Cairo (RJ)
- 11:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
- 18:40 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
- 19:00 Bangkok (RJ)
- 21:00 Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi (add) (RJ)
- DEPARTURES
- Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
- 06:15 Beirut (RJ)
- 06:30 Amman (RJ)
- 11:40 Amman, Chicago (RJ)
- 12:15 London (RJ)
- 12:25 Cairo (RJ)
- 13:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
- 13:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
- 13:45 Damascus (RJ)
- 14:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
- 14:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
- 14:45 Sanaa (RJ)
- Other Flights (Terminal 2)
- 04:00 Rome (AZ)
- 06:00 Khartoum (SD)
- 09:50 Cairo (MS)
- 12:40 Vienna (OS)
- 15:00 Kiev (SU)
- 19:00 Paris, Damascus (AF)
- 22:45 Athens, Beirut (OA)
- 23:05 London (BA)
- 01:20 Amsterdam (KL)
- Other Flights (Terminal 2)
- Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GFI 15:50)
- Vienna (OS) 16:30
- Kiev (SU) 18:40
- London (BA) 08:40
- Amsterdam (KL) 02:30
- Beirut, Athens (OA) 03:00

MARKET PRICES

- Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
- Apple 700/500
- Banana (Mukammal) 680
- Cabbage 620
- Carrot 270/150
- Cauliflower 160/120
- Cucumbers (large) 180/100
- Cucumbers (small) 330/120
- Eggplant 700/500
- Garlic 200/120
- Grapes 230/150
- Lemon 120/80
- Marrow (large) 120/80
- Marrow (small) 220/120
- Olives (green) 750/550
- Onion (green) 280/180
- Onion (dry) 220/150
- Orange 420/320
- Pepper (hot) 180/100
- Pepper (sweet) 180/100
- Potato 260/150
- Radish 130/80
- Spinach 180/120
- String Beans 620/450
- Tangerine 250/200
- Tomato 250/150

Interior minister in Bahrain to discuss security interests

MANAMA (J.T.) — Interior Minister Salameh Hamad met Sunday with the ruler of Bahrain, Sheikh Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa in Manama to discuss security cooperation between Jordan and Bahrain, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.



Salameh Hamad

The agency said that both sides exchanged views on bilateral relations and pan-Arab affairs as well as the Middle East peace process and issues of common concern.

Mr. Hamad, who arrived here late Saturday on a three-day visit, was quoted by the Gulf News Agency as saying that discussions between both sides will tackle ways of cooperation in various security fields but gave no

other details. Mr. Hamad was also Sunday received by Bahrain's prime minister Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa who said Bahrain was eager to pro-

more bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Petra quoted Mr. Hamad as saying that security in Bahrain means security for Jordan, and that Jordan is willing to offer Bahrain all possible assistance in security interests.

Mr. Hamad later met his Bahraini counterpart Sheikh Mohammad Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan visited Bahrain earlier this month, the first such high-level visit since the Gulf crisis.

The Prince's visit followed Bahrain's appointment of an envoy to Jordan in October and reflected an improvement in ties between the two countries.

2 suspects arrested in connection with murder

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Sunday apprehended two suspects in connection with the strangling of an 80-year-old woman Saturday in her apartment in Marka, an official source said.

The victim, Huson A., a widow who lived alone, was found dead by her daughter in her apartment near Marka Military Hospital Saturday at about noon, the source told the Jordan Times.

The official said all the victim's jewellery was missing from the apartment.

The two suspects, aged 21 and 22, were not identified. The official said they confessed Sunday and reenacted their crime.

"They told the authorities that they intended to rob the woman because she had a great deal of money and that they killed her to conceal their crime," the official said.

The official added that

one of the suspects was a relative of the victim, and had asked his friend to help him commit the crime.

"Both suffered from financial problems and were unemployed," the official said.

Brother arrested for killing sister

In Zarqa, a 26-year-old man was arrested last week for killing his divorced sister in Zarqa for allegedly having an affair with a man, according to an official source.

The source, who preferred anonymity, told the Jordan Times Sunday that investigations indicated that there was no affair between the victim and anyone else.

According to the source, Madiha A. 28, was at her father's house in Zarqa Camp when she was stabbed by her brother Samir A. Shortly after the incident, Samir gave himself up to authorities, said

the source. According to the source, Samir's relatives informed him that his sister was having an affair, and that there were tape recordings to support these allegations.

"Samir went to his father's house, without hearing the tapes, and stabbed his sister to death," the source said, adding that after listening to the tapes themselves, authorities said they heard nothing unusual or incriminating.

In Amman, a 65-year-old woman was killed Saturday after falling from the roof of her house in Jabal Zuhour, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

The report said the husband of the victim, Mariam S., told police that he heard something falling on the ground and when he went to check the matter he found his wife lying on the ground.

The woman was rushed to Al Bashir Hospital but died shortly afterwards, the report added.

Sextet jazz ensemble — a sax lover's dream

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Austrian jazz sextet Criss-Cross (not to confuse with Kriss-Kross, the rap act from New Orleans, Louisiana, popular in 1991-1992) is in town for two performances: tonight at the Marriott Hotel and Wednesday at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Their tour in Jordan is taking place under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor and is organized by the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation, and the Austrian Embassy in Amman.

Criss-Cross, a highly original jazz ensemble is led by its founder, pianist Adriane Mutenhaler, who is the only woman in the group.

The band also comprises Thomas Kugi, on soprano saxophone, Michael Erian, on alto saxophone, Helmut Strobl, on tenor saxophone, Heinrich Werkl, on bass, and Patrice Heral (of France), on drums.

The band already has several recordings published on CD and has played for theatre and film productions.

Criss-Cross plays a modern form of jazz. The concerts in Amman will feature, mostly, compositions by Mutenhaler and others by bass player Werkl.

Some titles bear strange characters' names like "Mrs. Phantasy", "Mr.



Thomas Kugi, soprano-saxophonist for the jazz group Criss-Cross, who will perform in Amman on Monday and Wednesday

Speed" and "Mr. Black Humour," and the entire programme is presented under the title "Visions and Realities."

The concert at the Marriott Hotel will be given in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

Seating will be arranged in small round tables and

the audience will be served soft drinks during the performance.

The classical, time-honoured "absolute silent listening" is not required and people will be free to move around.

This should help create a favourable setting for the improvisations that are essential to jazz.

Jordan to back any pan-Arab effort to combat environmental pollution

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Nader Thuheirat Sunday left for Cairo to take part in an Arab ministerial meeting on the environment in the Arab World.

The meeting will be held at the Arab League Headquarters, and discussions by Arab ministers responsible for the environment are expected to centre their

talks on the implementation of a pan-Arab programme on the environment.

Agreement is expected on a common programme for exchanging information on ways to deal with vessels that carry pollutants, the minister said in a pre-departure statement.

Mr. Thuheirat said Jordan would back any joint efforts to fight off pollution.

Arab ministers are also expected to set up coordination among Arab states in handling materials considered dangerous by the Montreal Protocol of 1987. They are also to raise questions related to fighting off desertification and to combat industrial pollution as well as awareness programmes on the protection of the environment at schools and through the media.

Last January Jordan announced that it was joining the convention for the prevention of sea pollution which was endorsed by the United Nations in 1983.

The convention aims to protect marine environments and it pledges to provide special equipment to deal with oil spills in sea waters.

Under Jordanian and international laws, vessels are not allowed to dump

any kind of waste at Aqaba port.

The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment is carrying out projects for the greening of the country by the year 2000.

This project is being run in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and local councils as well as the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

Workshop displays latest in telephone technologies

AMMAN (J.T.) — Siemens, the German electronics firm, Sunday organised a one-day workshop at the Regency Palace Hotel on the latest technology in telephone services.

At the meeting, which was attended by Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Sarai, Telecomunications Corporation (TCC) Director General Walid Dweik, a number of ministers and other officials, a Siemens expert outlined the benefits of the wireless telephone system "Local Wireless Loop" in the public switching network

which, if installed, would save the cost of infrastructure such as poles, wires and underground cables.

Mr. Dweik told the Jordan Times that the radio-telephone service which requires the installation of repeaters at points five kilometres away from one another, is not yet widely used in the world, but he noted that the TCC has invited Siemens, among other electronic firms, to present their systems to orient TCC and the public in Jordan on the latest technology.

Mr. Dweik said this type of telephone technology would be useful

and cost-effective in towns or new districts where no telephone infrastructures have been laid.

Siemens this month signed a JD 25 million contract with the TCC to install local line plant networks and last month signed a JD 26 million with the TCC to install digital telephone exchanges around Jordan.

A Siemens official said the new system has already been adopted in the self-rule areas of Palestine where no infrastructure for telephone networks have been laid.

The workshop was held in cooperation with the TCC.

The workshop presentation at the Regency Palace Hotel Sunday will be followed Monday by the opening of the Middle East Telecommunications Fair at the Amman International Fair Centre in Marj Al Hamam district.

The fair, which will be opened by Mr. Sarai, is organised by the TCC and will display technological products by international telephone service companies.

The telecommunications fair will run until Thursday, the TCC said.

Heart attack kills tourist

AMMAN (J.T.) — An Israeli tourist Friday died of a heart attack while on a visit to the Kingdom, according to official sources.

Oded Shtarkman, 55, from Kibbutz Village in Israel, was with an Israeli tour group visiting the High Place of Sacrifice in Petra when he suffered a heart attack, according to an official at the Israeli embassy.

According to the official, Mr. Shtarkman, who was accompanied by his wife,

was part of a tourist group from the same village on a three-day visit to the Kingdom.

The official added that Mr. Shtarkman's body was taken to Israel on Saturday. Mr. Shtarkman is the second Israeli to suffer a fatal heart attack while on a tour of Jordan.

On Sept. 16 a 70-year-old Israeli tourist, Moshe Spector, who was on a four-day visit with his wife, died in his hotel room of an infarction.



RAWABDEH OPENS EXHIBITION: Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh on Sunday opens a comprehensive art exhibition of works by Ministry of Education students at Tabariya Secondary School in Irbid. The exhibition included photos of His Majesty King Hussein, paintings, ceramics and other handicrafts. Mr. Rawabdeh also opened the major hall of Irbid Model School which was established at a total cost of JD 100,000. The hall is to be used for extracurricular activities. The deputy prime minister later attended the school's celebration of King Hussein's 60th birthday. The celebration included national songs, the traditional dabkeh dances and other performances. Earlier Mr. Rawabdeh, who was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Karaki, toured several schools in Irbid Governorate (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Abdullah presents token gift to rescuer

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein Sunday presented a token gift to a Jordanian citizen who had earlier come to the rescue of the Prince when his parachute landed at a distant area near Bala'ma in the north of the Kingdom. Fawwaz Deeb Baz picked up Prince Abdullah in his car, when the Prince's parachute landed eight kilometres away from the landing zone due to strong winds, and drove him to the landing site. In a gesture of appreciation, Prince Abdullah received Mr. Baz at the Royal Court to thank him for his help.

Bridge crossing hours to be extended

AMMAN (Petra) — The King Hussein bridge on the River Jordan will be open for traffic from 2.00 a.m. till midnight every day, except on Friday and Saturday, according to public security department sources. The sources said that the new arrangements will take effect as of Dec. 3. Traffic on the bridges on Friday and Saturday will remain as it is now until Dec. 23 when crossing hours will be extended to 3.00 p.m., the sources said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

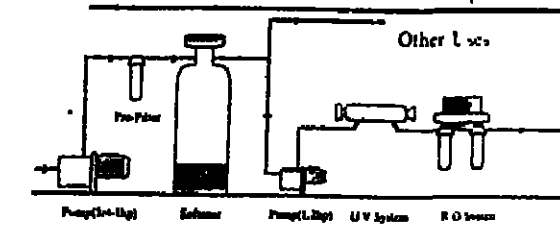
FILM
8.00 p.m.
"Le Choix Des Armes" at the French Cultural Centre

CONCERT
"Musical performance by Jazz Sextet Criss-Cross at the Royal Cultural Centre at

LECTURE
"The Geological History of the Rocks in Southern Jordan: Special Emphasis on Petra and Wadi Rum" by Dr. Abdul Qader Abed at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6.30 p.m.

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- * Water Filters
- * Chemicals For Water Treatment
- * Industrial Waste Water Treatment
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Communist Party confident ahead of Russian election

MOSCOW (R) — Three weeks before Russians vote in a parliamentary election, Communists are confident of achieving a spectacular comeback and raising the red flag again.

Just four years after the Soviet Union collapsed, opinion polls suggest the successor to the party which ruled with an iron grip for more than 70 years could win most seats in the election to the State Duma lower house on Dec. 17.

The mainstream Communist Party looks unlikely to win an absolute majority on its own. Domination of the Duma would also be one step to control of Russia because the president holds immense powers, including nominating the prime minister.

But riding a wave of discontent with market reforms, Communists and nationalists look set for a sizeable share of votes at the expense of liberals, an outcome which would raise questions about the future of economic reforms.

"Russia is now poised on the edge of the abyss. It is

begging for help. The people, stupefied by democratic lies and raw vodka, have been paralysed for almost 10 years," the Communist Party's election manifesto declares.

"If we all join forces to help it and preserve it from fighting, it will be reborn and will, just as in the past, emerge from all its troubles mightier still."

Russia's Communists have been inspired by former Communist Aleksander Kwasniewski's win in Poland's presidential election and the resurgence of ex-Communists across Eastern Europe.

"Kwasniewski's victory inspires us and gives us the right to face the future with confidence," Valentin Kuptsov, a senior party leader, said last week.

But Russia's Communists, with their nostalgia for the past, are a far cry from Poland's Social Democrats and a Communist victory remains far from certain here.

Polls suggest about half the about 100 million voters have not yet decided who to

vote for or whether to vote at all, and show Communists gaining a maximum of 15 per cent of the votes.

Even so, all the main opinion polls put them ahead of the other 42 parties and blocs.

President Boris Yeltsin has said he will do all he can to stop the Communists winning, but even a recent Kremlin analysis put the Communist Party on 14 per cent of the likely vote.

Their main rivals include the nationalist Congress of Russian Communities including popular General Alexander Lebed, ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party (DPR) and the centrist Women of Russia Movement.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's centre-right Our Home Is Russia, economist Grigory Yavlinsky's reformist Yabloko Bloc and the conservative Agrarian Party also have good chances of getting enough votes to enter parliament.

Fewer than 10 parties are expected to win seats in the

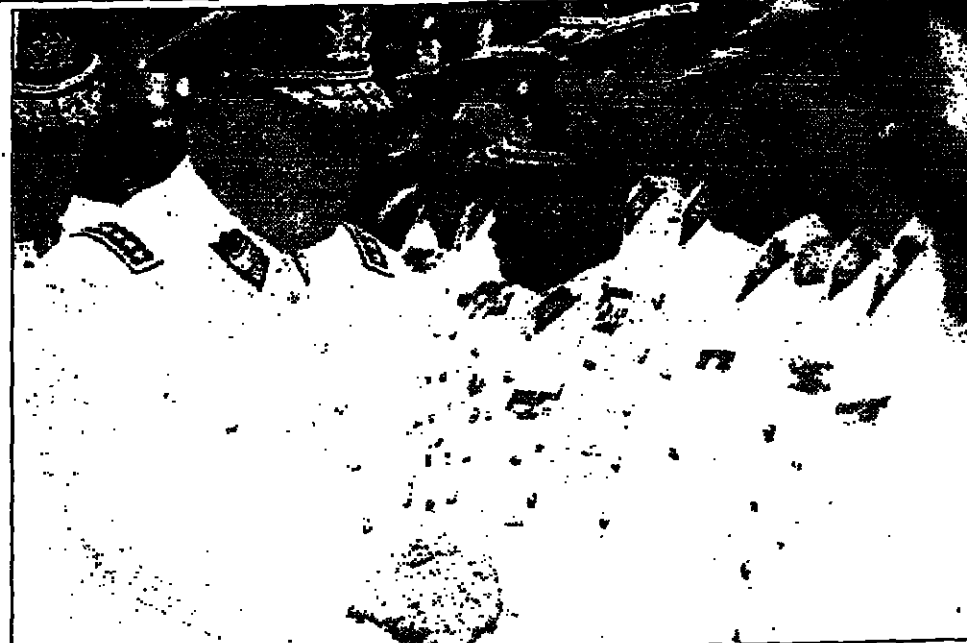
party list section of the vote, where 225 seats will be divided among parties which win at least five per cent of the vote. The other 225 seats are to be allocated in single-mandate constituencies.

How much the Communists would be ready to turn back the clock remains to be seen. Their ability to do so will be decided by how many seats they, or any parliamentary alliance they form, can control.

Russia's Communists are openly hostile to market reforms, want some state controls of industry restored and suggest the Soviet Union should be recreated voluntarily.

Some commentators express concern that Communists in Russia's regions are more conservative than the party's leaders and could push for hardline policies after the election.

But others say the Communists see a need for some reforms and would not want to tamper too much with the economy.



Pinochet celebrates 80th birthday

SANTIAGO — Gen. Augusto Pinochet celebrated his 80th birthday by listening to a serenade of the music he likes most: German military marches. When the former dictator appeared at the door of his Santiago residence Saturday, a band of the army he has commanded for more than 22 years played "happy birthday," followed by such marches as Erika, I Had A Comrade, Lily Marlene. About 100 cheering and applauding people gathered in front of the residence, many holding Chilean flags and pictures of Pinochet. The birthday celebrations closed with a dinner in Santiago and at least 20 other simultaneous dinners across the country. The photograph shows Gen. Pinochet greeting armed forces officials who came to his residence to wish him a happy birthday (AFP photo).

Shevardnadze sworn in as president

TBILISI (R) — Former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was sworn in as Georgia's president Sunday and promised to bring peace and prosperity to the trans-Caucasus state.

Mr. Shevardnadze, 67, looked confident as he addressed about 3,000 people gathered outside the parliament building in central Tbilisi — scene of many violent riots which have rocked the nation of five million people in the last eight years.

"I, the president of Georgia, solemnly affirm before God and the nation that I shall abide by the Georgian constitution defend the independence of the country, its unity and indivisibility," the silver-haired leader told the solemn gathering at the huge columned building.

Calling for patience from his people, he said: "In the next five or 10 years Georgia will become one of the most prosperous countries. This will really happen and we shall believe in this."

Georgia has often been

rocked by violence and economic problems since it became independent in 1991.

Many political analysts have said that hopes for stability and peace prompted many Georgians, tired of years of separatist revolts and power struggle, to vote for Mr. Shevardnadze.

Mr. Shevardnadze, who was also blessed by the head of Georgia's Orthodox Church, returned to rule the former Soviet republic after its democratically-elected president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was ousted in a bloody coup in late 1991.

Mr. Shevardnadze, who played a role in ending the cold war as Soviet foreign minister, first took the title of head of state. But he won nearly 75 per cent support in a presidential election on Nov. 5 after Georgia decided to restore the presidency.

His Citizen's Union Party secured a commanding hold on the parliament in polls held on the same day as the presidential election.

Mr. Shevardnadze has removed the threat of political rivals who turned against him even though

they initially helped him by toppling Gamsakhurdia.

The last to go was Dzhaba Ioseliani, the head of the feared Mkhedroni paramilitary group. He was arrested days after the elections following an abortive assassination attempt on Mr. Shevardnadze in August.

Georgia's new constitution, adopted in a national referendum this year, gives sweeping powers to the president who will also be head of the government.

In his inaugural speech, Mr. Shevardnadze said he was ready to offer strong autonomy for the Black Sea province of Abkhazia, controlled by separatists who forced out the Georgian army in 1993.

He said the offer of more autonomy also concerned South Ossetia, another breakaway region where fierce fighting took place in 1992.

"We are ready for any dialogue at any level," Mr. Shevardnadze said.

The inauguration ceremony was followed by a military parade.

Russian MP killed on campaign trail

MOSCOW (R) — A young liberal member of Russia's lower house of parliament was killed Sunday during a campaign trip three weeks before December's election, a regional official said.

The official from the regional administration in Chita, about 5,000 kilometres southeast of Moscow, confirmed that 34-year-old Sergei Markidonov had been killed while on the campaign trail in the town of Petrovsk-Zabaikalsky.

"He died tragically," the official, who declined to be named, told Reuters by telephone from Chita.

He did not say how Mr. Markidonov, who had served on influential privatisation and economic committees, had died and would not confirm that he had been murdered.

"Investigators have gone

from Chita to the town where it happened. It is hard to say whether this had a political or criminal motive," he said.

ITAR-TASS and Interfax News Agencies reported Mr. Markidonov's death but also did not say how he was killed. TASS said a criminal investigation had been launched.

Mr. Markidonov was elected to the State Duma lower house in December 1993 for the reformist Russia's Choice party.

He was the fourth parliamentarian killed since the 1993 election. The other deaths have been linked with an upsurge in murders by mafia-style gangs and violent business rivalry.

Mr. Markidonov was the first candidate to have been killed since the start of the campaign for the election to

the Duma on Dec. 17.

The local administration official confirmed Mr. Markidonov had been holding pre-election meetings in Petrovsk-Zabaikalsky in Chita, a gold-producing region beyond Lake Baikal in Siberia and close to the border with Mongolia.

But he did not say if Mr. Markidonov had died while addressing voters or after an election meeting.

Mr. Markidonov had been a member of the Duma's Committee for Property, Privatisation and Economic Activities since January 1994.

He had been chairman of Chita Region's Commission on Economic Reform from 1990 to 1992 and head of the Chita Regional Property Fund from 1992 to 1993.

Mandela lashes out at Nigerian leader

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — President Nelson Mandela says he wants Shell oil company to scrap a planned \$4 billion project in Nigeria because of human rights abuses there.

"What we are now proposing are short and sharp measures which will produce the results Nigeria and the world desire," Mr. Mandela said in an interview published in the Sunday Independent newspaper.

Using unusually strong language, the normally diplomatic Mandela described Nigeria's military leadership under Gen. Sani Abacha as an "illegitimate, barbaric, arrogant dictatorship which has murdered activists using a kangaroo court and false evidence."

Angered by Nigeria's execution of nine political activists this month, Mr. Mandela has led calls for an oil embargo and other economic and cultural sanctions against Nigeria. He also spearheaded Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth.

"I warned (Shell) that we are going to take action against them in this country, because we can't allow people to think in terms of their gains when the very lives of human beings are involved," Mr. Mandela said.

He wants Nigeria to free political prisoners and move faster toward restoring elected civilian rule than the three-year timetable announced recently by Gen. Abacha.

"Abacha is sitting on a volcano and I am going to explode it under him," Mr. Mandela said.

He said he would continue talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister John Major on organising a U.N. Security Council resolution for sanctions against Nigeria. Mr. Mandela said Mr. Major told him China would veto such a move, and that he therefore hoped to speak directly to Chinese leaders on the matter.

Any international campaign would need an active internal campaign working against the Abacha regime, Mr. Mandela said.

"It is no use for Nigerian leaders to shout from abroad and not to ensure that the fires of resistance are burning inside Nigeria," said Mr. Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison for trying to overthrow the apartheid government. He became president after South Africa's first all-race election last year.

Wests 'may have eaten' parts of victims

LONDON (R) — Rosemary West, Britain's most notorious serial killer after being found guilty of killing 10 women and girls, may have indulged in cannibalism along with her sadistic sexual and murderous frenzies, a psychologist said.

Markings on leg bones dug up from under the patio at the "house of horrors" where West lived with her husband Frederick indicated that flesh had been carved off the bodies of the victims, forensic psychologist Dr. Paul Britton said.

"When you carve meat you often leave marks on the bone. I'm saying cannibalism was likely to be part of the ritual," Dr. Britton told the Sunday Times newspaper.

"These were profoundly depraved people. There were no boundaries which they would not cross."

Dr. Britton, who helped police in Gloucester, western England investigate the murders, noted that fingers and kneecaps were also missing from some of the bodies.

Ms. West, 41, was convicted this week of the 10 murders including those of her teenage daughter Heather and eight-year-old stepdaughter Charmaine.

Frederick, charged with those 10 murders and two others, was found hanged in his prison cell last January.

Witnesses told her trial, which fascinated and horrified Britain, that the Wests had brutally raped and sexually abused them. One daughter said she was painfully raped and abused from the age of eight and told it was preparation for marriage.

Newspapers, restricted to reporting only evidence given at trial before Ms. West's conviction and life sentence, have been full of gruesome revelations in the days since.

Former Mexican president probed for false passport, paper says

MEXICO CITY (R) — In another scandal to hit Mexico's once all-powerful Salinas family, authorities are investigating former President Carlos Salinas for using a false passport, a Mexican newspaper has reported.

The report comes a day after officials confirmed the arrest of Mr. Salinas' sister-in-law in a Swiss money-laundering probe and that his brother Raul was being investigated for allegedly banking away millions in ill-gotten gains.

Saturday's report, in Mexico City's La Jornada said Foreign Ministry officials are wading through years of passport applications in the name of Alberto Navarro, the alleged alias of the former president now in self-imposed exile.

Mr. Salinas is believed to be living in Canada, and La Jornada reported he travels frequently and has used the Navarro name to enter Cuba. During his administration, Mr. Salinas actively promoted Mexican investments in the Caribbean

island.

Mexico City's Reforma newspaper also reported Mr. Salinas has been seen in Cuba recently, staying at the luxurious Cayo Coco Hotel. Reforma said he registered under the name of Navarro, although using the first name Alvaro not Alberto.

Government officials were not immediately available to confirm or deny the investigation into Mr. Salinas, whose image has been badly tarnished since left office a year ago.

The family name was dragged further through the mud Friday when Swiss officials confirmed the arrest of Mr. Salinas' sister-in-law Paulina Castanon in a money-laundering probe. Swiss and Mexican officials also said they were searching for more secret bank accounts used by Raul Salinas. Ms. Castanon's husband, under a false name, allegedly concealed \$84 million piled up in secret accounts in Switzerland and elsewhere while holding office in his younger Brother's administration.

Ms. Castanon was arrested on Nov. 15 as she tried to make a withdrawal of an unspecified amount of money from one of the secret accounts using false documents, Swiss police said.

"For them, this movement of such a large amount of money could imply some possible money-laundering, that is why she is under arrest there," Deputy Attorney General Manuel Galan said in a radio interview. But he stressed that Ms. Castanon was not under investigation in Mexico.

A source at the attorney general's office said Mexican officials had detected at least three other secret accounts held by Raul Salinas under a false name in various parts of the world.

Swiss federal prosecutors said in a statement, without naming Ms. Castanon, that "a judicial police inquiry is under way into several Mexican nationals for alleged activities in financing drug trafficking and laundering money from the traffic of drugs."

Sorry Charles — queen to reign 20 more years

LONDON (R) — Queen Elizabeth will probably live and reign for another 20 years, becoming the longest-surviving monarch in British history, insurance actuaries predict. Three experts on life expectancy told the Independent On Sunday newspaper that the queen's son and heir Prince Charles would probably only get to reign for 13 years — compared to Queen Elizabeth's expected 60 years on the throne.

"I would expect the queen to be able to reign for another 20 years," Andrew Wilson, actuary for Watson Wyatt's team of insurance assessors, told the newspaper. "Although her current life expectancy is 89, I wouldn't be at all surprised if she lived to be 90-plus."

Actuaries estimate life expectancy based on a person's current age, their lifestyle and family history. The non-smoking 69-year-old queen, with her pampered existence, access to medical care and 95-year-old mother, possesses all the pointers to a long life.

Queen Victoria and King George III both lived to be 81 but the actuaries say the odds are that Elizabeth will easily outstrip that age. Prudential Assurance estimated she would die aged 84 in 2010, while Sun Alliance gave her until 2011. Prince Charles, 47, has a life expectancy of about 75, the firms said.

But they differ on when the queen will die and leave the throne to Prince Charles, with Sun Alliance seeing him reigning until 2024 and Wilson Wyatt predicting he will live to 80, vacating the throne to his son Prince William in 2028.

No divorce for Charles, Diana for 2 years — report

LONDON (AFP) — The Sunday Times reported Sunday that the Prince of Wales would wait at least two years before divorcing his wife Princess Diana. The front-page report quoted unnamed senior officials at Buckingham Palace. The couple have been separated for almost three years. The report did not say why the future king of England wished to wait five years before filing for divorce.

Under present laws, a couple can divorce after two years of mutually agreed separation, even if only one partner files for divorce. The Sunday Times said that neither Prince Charles nor Princess Diana were keen to take the first step in initiating divorce proceedings. In her interview with the BBC last Monday, the princess said: "I don't want a divorce but obviously we need clarity." She added: "I await my husband's decision on which way we're to go."

Hard-up monks open their doors to discos

LONDON (R) — The hard-up monks of Belmont Abbey, near Hereford in western England, have thrown open their doors for wedding receptions, dinner-dances and discos. Britain's Independent newspaper reported Saturday. The closure of the abbey's private school for boys last year left the 25 resident monks with a large unused refectory. Faced with rising bills for the upkeep of the abbey, the monks decided they could turn the refectory into a money-spinner by promoting it as a novel venue for parties and other special occasions. But the monks were vetting all applications to avoid any rowdy gatherings and would not be dancing the night away themselves, Father Nicholas Wetz told the independent. "I don't think any rave-ups will be the order of the day. We don't want to jeopardise the tranquillity of our life. Most of our monks will be tucked up in bed," he said.

Ramos sees peace pact with Muslims

MANILA (R) — President Fidel Ramos said Sunday on the eve of talks with Muslim rebels that his government was optimistic of reaching a peace agreement ending a 23-year revolt for Muslim self-rule in the southern Philippines.

Mr. Ramos, in a statement released by the presidential palace, said the Philippines was determined "to bring the peace talks to a successful conclusion" after more than two years of negotiations.

Government negotiators

led by Ambassador Manuel Yan are to hold a third round of talks with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) starting Monday in Jakarta. Indonesia is mediating the negotiations.

The Philippines Saturday placed its army and police on alert on southern Mindanao Island to forestall any attacks by breakaway guerrilla groups not taking part in the negotiations, officials said.

"We approach the (Jakarta) talks...with opti-

mism that peace, and, eventually, sustained development for all will finally reign in Mindanao," Mr. Ramos said.

He said the two sides had reached agreement on more than 100 points on the agenda, or on more than 95 per cent of issues, and only the mechanics of setting up an autonomous Muslim regional government and integrating MNLF forces into the army and police were unresolved.



Dublin supporters of the right to divorce celebrate the passing of the referendum to change the constitution in the Irish Republic to allow divorce (AFP photo)

Ireland approves divorce by a fraction

DUBLIN (R) — Ireland voted by a fraction of a percentage point Saturday to end a 70-year ban on divorce in a knife-edge referendum that forced an unprecedented recount.

The final tally showed that 50.28 per cent of people approved a constitutional amendment to allow remarriage while 49.72 favoured maintaining Ireland's position as the only country in the European Union to outlaw divorce.

Opponents of divorce, backed by the Roman Catholic Church, said afterwards they were considering mounting a legal challenge to the referendum because of the money the government spent financing the vote.

"The courts are open to everyone," Prime Minister John Bruton told reporters after the recount. "But I don't think it (a legal challenge) will be successful."

The recount extended the "yes" lobby's winning majority from 7,520 to 9,124 after 910 of its votes were found in a South Dublin constituency and other irregularities were detected.

The winning majority was equivalent to the population of an average Irish village and was the closest result in the country's electoral history. The recount was without precedent.

But it showed that Mr. Bruton's government and opposition parties, which all supported changing the constitution, had lost touch with half of the electorate on a key social issue.

"I am very relieved," said Mr. Bruton. "It was a very worrying day. It may be a narrow margin but it was a clear verdict." He added just before the recount was ordered after an appeal by the anti-divorce lobby.

Opponents of divorce said

they might mount a high court challenge based on an earlier ruling that said the government's decision to spend 500,000 Irish pounds (\$750,000) advertising the referendum was unconstitutional.

The government said it had spent the cash to inform the electorate about the poll but the court said it had effectively campaigned for a "yes" vote.

The win overturned the result of a similar referendum in 1986 when a conservative backlash made nonsense of opinion polls and defeated the "yes" lobby by a 2-1 majority.

The latest result was due largely to a swing towards legalised divorce in Dublin, where the bulk of voters live. All 11 constituencies in the capital voted "yes", against only six last time.

Overall the result showed a swing of more than 14 per cent towards ending the

constitutional ban on divorce and was in line with opinion polls showing a neck and neck finish.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy, which championed the "no" vote with support from Pope John Paul, said the church would now have to work to help people in broken marriages.

It campaigned against divorce saying it would only encourage unhappy couples to break up, wreck homes and young lives and cost the taxpayer money.

But Mr. Bruton and the entire political establishment said it would give the nation's 80,000 separated couples a second chance and lift the stigma of adultery from their lives.

The result cast long shadows over any intention political parties might have of putting the vexed issue of abortion before a similar plebiscite, commentators said.

Clinton's European visit becomes a peace mission

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton departs this week on a European trip that had been designed to showcase peace efforts in Northern Ireland but will likely be overshadowed by his bid to end Bosnia's bloody war.

Mr. Clinton, originally scheduled to depart for London Monday, that night will instead deliver a nationally televised Oval Office address on the need for Americans to send 20,000 of their sons and daughters to Bosnia to ensure peace.

With Congress and the public openly sceptical about committing troops to the NATO peacekeeping venture, Mr. Clinton intends to devote the next few weeks to building support for the high-risk mission.

"The nature of the trip certainly has changed," said a senior administration official. "We'll still be fostering peace but obviously Bosnia will take on a high priority."

Although Mr. Clinton is not legally obligated to obtain the permission of Congress to send troops to Bosnia, it would amount to political suicide for him to commit forces to the mission without the support of lawmakers and the public.

Mr. Clinton will confer with strategists and officials Tuesday before departing for London and talks with British Prime Minister John Major the next day.

Administration officials say that Mr. Clinton wants to discuss the current stalemate in peace efforts for

Northern Ireland, but that Bosnia will take up much of their talks. "We share the same concerns and obviously want to take advantage of this opportunity" for peace in Bosnia, one official said.

Mr. Clinton's bid to generate support at home has stressed the dangers of the Bosnian conflict spilling over into other parts of Europe. Aides say he hopes the leaders of Europe will support his argument.

Clinton aides also added on a stop Saturday in Germany, where he will visit with some of the U.S. troops who would be sent to Bosnia for the peacekeeping mission.

Despite the preoccupation with Bosnia, administration officials say Mr. Clinton hopes his trip — which will make him the first American president to visit Belfast — will help solve Northern Ireland's problems.

"The U.S. role is not to push our own agenda on them," one senior administration official said, "but rather to support those who can move things forward."

"I would not expect us to be closing deals while we're there," the official said, adding that the intent is to "put the full weight of the U.S. government" behind peace efforts.

Guerrillas of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) have fought British rule in Northern Ireland for 25 years until an August 1994 ceasefire brought peace to the British province. But Britain wants the IRA to

start disarming before it will agree to all-party talks aimed at settling the conflict.

The IRA's political wing, Sinn Féin, wants Britain to announce a target date for all-party talks while an international panel discusses the timing and practicalities of disarming guerrillas.

The United States backs a "twin-track" approach in which the two issues are dealt with separately, with talks proceeding while discussions on disarmament take place.

Mr. Clinton's revised schedule takes him to London Wednesday, Belfast Thursday and Dublin Friday. Following his stop in Germany Saturday he will fly to Spain for a brief visit Sunday before returning to Washington.

Meanwhile politicians for and against continued British rule in Northern Ireland hope that Mr. Clinton will help break a peace process deadlock when he visits the island this week.

"We were hoping that he (Clinton) would be able to exert some influence," the leader of the province's pro-British Protestant Unionists, David Trimble, said Sunday.

Mr. Trimble, who met Mr. Clinton in Washington this month, said he hoped the U.S. leader would persuade the IRA's political wing, Sinn Féin, to drop its refusal to get its guerrilla supporters to disarm to win entry to all-party peace talks.

"We were hoping that his

visit and the influence he would be exerting in favour of de-commissioning would produce some movement from Sinn Féin, but unfortunately it doesn't appear to have done so yet," Mr. Trimble told British Television.

He was speaking hours after a British weekly newspaper, The Observer, said that British MI5 intelligence service had warned British Prime Minister John Major that twin guerrilla ceasefires which ushered in peace were fraying because of the deadlock.

It said MI5 director Stella Rimington and her designated successor, Stephen Lander, had warned Mr. Major that the 15-month truce declared by the IRA and its Protestant loyalist foes were teetering.

There was no immediate reaction to the report, which followed gloomy assessments on the state of the peace process by Irish officials and Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Féin.

Mr. Adams, whose party seeks to end British rule of Northern Ireland, has repeatedly said that there is a danger of renewed conflict because of Britain's refusal to call all-party talks before the IRA and its Protestant rivals start disarming.

He said last week that Britain was effectively no longer in the peace process and expressed hope that Mr. Clinton might unlock the door to progress.

S. Korea 'digs into' defence slush fund case

SEOUL (R) — South Korean television said Sunday state investigators plan to call two ex-defence ministers for questioning in a slush fund scandal involving former President Roh Tae-woo, but the prosecution-general's office denied the report.

KBS television said the investigation would focus on a defence programme carried out during Mr. Roh's time in office to modernise South Korea's military capabilities, KBS said.

lition won (\$18.2 billion) was spent by the government on the project between 1988 and 1993.

But a state prosecution official said: "At the moment we have no plan to investigate the programme."

KBS and other local media reports said former defence ministers Lee Sang-hoon and Lee Jong-koo were among several ex-Defence Ministry officials likely to be summoned, possibly this week.

Both men were arrested in

1993 on charges of taking bribes linked to the same programme, under which South Korea had awarded huge contracts to foreign defence companies. They were released six months later after receiving suspended sentences.

Opposition politicians have long alleged that Mr. Roh received huge kickbacks from deals with foreign defence contractors.

Mr. Roh was arrested on Nov. 16 on charges of taking bribes totalling more than \$300 million during his

term, which is part of the \$654 million he confessed to amassing while in office.

A deal to buy 120 F-16 jet fighters from General Dynamics of the United States is among the projects to be examined, KBS said. Others include the procurement of anti-submarine aircraft and construction of destroyers and helicopters.

The General Dynamics contract raised eyebrows in 1991, as it reversed a previous decision to award the contract to McDonnell Douglas.

Sri Lankan army reportedly ready to mark Jaffna victory

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan troops expect to be able to raise the national flag over separatist rebels' northern Jaffna stronghold and celebrate its fall Sunday, a state newspaper said.

Elite army commandos and airborne troops, who encircled Jaffna in two flank attacks last week, plan to mop up the remaining resistance from Tamil rebels trapped in the town, the Sinhalese-language Silumina newspaper said.

Security has been beefed up in the capital Colombo and in the east as a precaution against possible attacks by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels to mark the 41st birthday of their leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, military sources said.

The government has also warned that it will deal severely with anyone trying

to stir up communal violence in the euphoria it expects after the army's capture of Jaffna.

The military high command is meanwhile drawing up plans for further offensives to weaken the rebels and force them to resume peace talks, the independent Sunday Times newspaper said.

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte met security chiefs last week to plan operations in the north-central Wanni mainland region, to which the rebels have withdrawn, it said.

Rebel radio Sunday announced plans to remember guerrillas killed during 12 years of war at the end of Martyrs' Week Monday.

Parents of rebel fighters killed will assemble at rebel war cemeteries and temples, it said.

More than 50,000 people have died in the war for an

independent homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east.

A military spokesman said troops Sunday morning were clearing newly captured areas of mines and boobytraps laid by the rebels, who have controlled Jaffna for much of the past 10 years.

The gas fired by the LTTE in Friday's counter-attacks to delay advancing troops and rescue rebels trapped in Jaffna has been identified as teargas, he said.

He said none of the soldiers, who were wearing gas masks and protective clothing, were wounded in the attack. Troops had recovered gas canisters left behind by the rebels.

One soldier was killed and four wounded when an army listening post was attacked by rebels in eastern Batticaloa Saturday night, the military spokesman

said.

Military sources said they had monitored a rebel buildup in the east and believed the Tigers were planning to step up attacks in the region to make up for their losses in the north.

Rebel radio said Sunday that the rebels had lost 25 fighters but inflicted heavy casualties on government troops in Friday's bitter fighting, which went on until dawn the next day.

Air force supersonic F-7 fighter-bombers and Pucara ground attack aircraft bombed Vadamarachchi and Thennarachi in the Jaffna peninsula Friday and Saturday, Voice of Tigers said.

The same areas were also heavily shelled by the army, said the radio, monitored by Reuters in Vavuniya, the northernmost town under government control.

Bolivia military to exhume Guevara's remains

LA PAZ (AFP) — The Bolivian military announced Saturday it will exhume guerrilla leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara and turn his remains over to his family.

Retired General Mario Vargas Salinas caused an uproar here recently by announcing that Guevara, who was captured and killed by Bolivian troops in 1967, had been buried in a mass grave near the airport at Vallegrande, a city in the Andes foothills.

Gen. Vargas Salinas said that he had been present at the burial on Oct. 11, 1967, when he was just a 28-year-old captain.

Until Gen. Vargas Salinas' revelation, Guevara's final resting place had been perhaps the most closely guarded military secret in Bolivia.

Bolivia's military high command initially resisted calls to order a search for the remains but caved in under pressure from President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada.

(The Bolivian Armed Forces) have authorised

General Mario Vargas Salinas to indicate the location of the mortal remains of the Argentine-Cuban guerrilla so they can be turned over to his family," the military said in a statement.

Aleida Guevara, the daughter of the rebel leader, said she doubted the reports that her father had been buried near one of the Vallegrande's airport runways.

"We still don't know what the real story is," she said in a radio interview from Cuba with an Argentine radio network.

"Everyone thinks that this is just an attention-get way to bother us."

Ms. Guevara, a pediatrician who was six when her father died, said that he would not want to be exhumed.

"The general consensus of the family is to do what he would have wanted. He said: 'Wherever I fall is where I want to be,'" she said.

Che Guevara, an Argentine doctor who became an

ally of Fidel Castro in the Cuban Revolution, broke with Castro and left for Bolivia where he planned to foment another revolution.

The attempt failed after 11 months largely because of the inability of his band to form any bonds with Quechua-speaking Indians living in Bolivia's highlands.

The Bolivian government — armed with a resolution signed by Mr. Sanchez de Lozada — also named an inter-institutional panel late Friday to investigate and organise a search for Che Guevara's remains.

The commission is made up of Remberto Lopez, the national defence secretary, National Interior Minister Hugo San Martin, and General Armando Balcazar, the inspector general of the army.

It was unclear when the commission would begin its work, although Gen. Vargas Salinas said in a telephone interview from his home in Santa Cruz that the panel had contacted him.

Guevara was captured by

a Bolivian military patrol on Oct. 8, 1967 and killed the following day. His hands were cut off and a mask made of his face to prove his identity.

The rest of his body was partially incinerated on Oct. 11 and thrown into a common grave. About six of the estimated two dozen other rebels killed along with him are also believed buried in the mass grave.

As might be expected, the prospect of digging up the legendary rebel has shaken the town of Vallegrande.

Groups of young men and women, armed with shovels, were seen headed to the airport Saturday. Asked what they were doing, one replied: "We're looking for Che."

Some of the bit players in Bolivia's nearly 30-year-old rebel drama are still in Vallegrande, including a former soldier living here who said he had been sent out to buy kerosene.

"I didn't know why but later I was told it was to burn the bodies of the guerrillas," he said.

U.N. warned of Rwanda genocide, paper says

LONDON (R) — The United Nations was warned three months before mass killing erupted in Rwanda that extremists were planning a massacre, The Observer newspaper reported.

It said a "secret cable" was sent to General Romeo Dallaire, the U.N. commander in Rwanda, in January 1994 warning that Hutu extremists were planning to exterminate minority Tutsis.

The cable cited information supplied by a senior

member of Rwanda's armed forces who trained the Hutu Interahamwe extremist militia but started having doubts, it said.

According to the newspaper, published Sundays, the cable said the informant had been ordered "to register all Tutsis in Kigali. He suspects it is for their extermination."

It said U.N. officials in New York did not show the cable to the Security Council, which refused to

give permission to Gen. Dallaire to raid the extremists' camps.

Genocidal killings erupted after Hutu strongman Juvenal Habyarimana was assassinated in April last year. His followers, mainly the army and militiamen, hunted down his suspected killers — mostly Tutsis.

In two months, up to a million ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in a frenzy.

There is residual resent-

ment in Rwanda against U.N. forces for failing to stop the genocide, during which the number of peacekeepers was cut.

Rwanda said Saturday it did not want to renew the mandate of the remaining 1,800 U.N. peacekeepers.

The new government accuses some U.N. agencies and non-governmental agencies of competing for scarce funds and doing little more than sustaining their own existence.

Charles's lover reportedly plotted against Diana

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles's long-time love Camilla Parker Bowles encouraged him to marry Lady Diana Spencer because she believed her rival was "gormless", her former brother-in-law told a British newspaper.

Richard Parker Bowles, brother of Camilla's ex-husband Andrew Parker Bowles, was quoted by the Mail On Sunday newspaper as saying his sister-in-law saw Princess Diana as easy to manipulate and no threat to her place in Prince Charles's heart.

Both Prince Charles and Princess Diana have confessed to adultery in television interviews that startled Britons and fascinated the world. Prince Charles did not name the woman involved but he has never denied media reports that it was Mrs. Parker Bowles.

A former girlfriend of Prince Charles, she was married to a courtier for 21 years but they divorced quietly in January this year after the heir to the throne's confession.

"She initially encouraged the relationship between Prince Charles and Princess Diana because she thought Princess Diana was gormless (stupid)," the newspaper quoted Richard Parker

Bowles as saying. "She never saw Diana as a threat. Over the years Camilla did intimate to me that she thought Diana was either half-witted or quite mad."

In her interview shown Monday, Princess Diana said she knew about her husband's affair with his old flame but could do little about it. She said her despair led to a battle with the eating disorder bulimia.

The popular princess also confirmed much of what newspapers had been reporting about her for years — that she hurt herself deliberately to get attention, felt victimised by the royal family and had an affair with James Hewitt, her former riding instructor.

Richard Parker Bowles said Camilla encouraged Prince Charles to marry Princess Diana, a demure teenager, in 1981.

"Camilla knew that as a woman with a past, she would never be accepted as Charles's wife. But she also thought Diana was someone whom she could manipulate," he said.

"Camilla knew she would keep Charles's heart, which she has done. She never wanted to marry Charles, she wanted to continue to be his paramour but her game

plan was to stay married to Andrew."

He said he felt sorry for Princess Diana, adding: "The fact is that if Camilla had been a child on the beach, she would have knocked other children's sandcastles down. She is a wreck at heart. She doesn't like to see other people happy."

Meanwhile endangered whales off Patagonia put on a royal show Saturday for Princess Diana on the third day of her debut in Argentina as Britain's goodwill ambassador.

Princess Diana appeared to forget the scandal of her confessions of adultery as she leaned on the side of a small launch gazing at a baby right whale frolicking in the South Atlantic.

The four-month-old calf, never far from its protective 50-foot (15-metre) mother, whacked its huge tail against the water and leapt out of the ocean while waiting for the Princess of Wales.

When she arrived, spurning a life jacket to show off a pale blue jacket and cream skirt, the baby whale reared its head near the bow of Princess Diana's boat.

Right whales come to the sheltered Atlantic waters around the empty peninsula

Valdes to breed from May to November. Only about 4,000 of these mammals survive compared to about 100,000 at the turn of the century.

The 34-year-old princess laughed and chatted with other passengers, shadowed at all times by an Argentine gunboat and a large catamaran packed with journalists who have tracked her every move since she revealed the secret life of Britain's royals in the television interview.

Then a helicopter whisked Princess Diana to the home of a local rancher for lunch before her visit to Gaiman, 100 kilometres south, for tea with the descendants of Welsh settlers.

The Welsh arrived 130 years ago seeking a new homeland far from the English political and linguistic yoke. They found it in the windswept desert that Charles Darwin called "wretched and useless."

Some of the Patagonian Welsh, remembering their nationalist roots, oppose the royal visit. Others say she is "just another tourist."

Diana was scheduled to fly home to Britain Sunday.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
 Established 1975
 Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

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Editorial and advertising offices:
 Jordan Press Foundation,
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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
 Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
 Jordan Times advertising department.

Ends do not justify means

THERE IS nothing new about Cairo's call for convening an international conference to combat terrorism in the aftermath of the recent attacks against Egyptian embassies in Pakistan and Bulgaria. The international community has been inundated with similar requests in the past two decades. Hardly any international conference in the past 25 years did not have the subject of counter-terrorism on its agenda.

If the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 can be taken as an example, it will be remembered that most of the developing countries voiced strong reservations against a blanket definition of terrorism by drawing attention to the distinction between terrorists and liberation movements. This dichotomy has been the singular most important reason that has effectively prevented the international community from agreeing on a common action against terrorism in all its forms.

Should the world heed Cairo's plea for an immediate international conference on terrorism, the participating countries would surely be confronted with the same old academic debate about the semantic differences between one set of violence and the other. What could also complicate matters for any international effort wishing to address the phenomenon is the avowed intention of Egypt and like-minded states to seek and win international approval for their own methods to fight terrorism. Judging by the official and mass media rhetoric emanating from Cairo, the Egyptian authorities have apparently more in mind than lawful procedures to fight terrorism. Egyptian Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfi has recently vowed to deploy his country's "strong arm" to apprehend terrorists working against Egyptian interests and security. "The law of an eye for an eye will be applied to them," General Alfi warned. If this is the kind of standards of which Cairo wishes to seek international consent in its struggle against terrorism, Egypt could be up for surprises because the international community is not about to go that far in combating terrorism. The picture does not get any better when we listen to what the Egyptian press has to say on the subject. The government owned newspaper, Akhbar Al Yom, has recently gone as far as calling on the government to kidnap Egyptian militants hiding abroad and bring them home. In a front-page editorial, the paper also called for "preventive strikes" against countries harbouring terrorists.

While we support Egypt in its struggle to eliminate terrorism we cannot agree with its methods to accomplish this legitimate end. There are very few who subscribe to the proposition that a wrong can or should be corrected by another wrong. Terrorism cannot be defeated by military or police means alone. Political and socio-economic factors that lead to violence need to be addressed before the problem can be effectively dealt with. In the final analysis only through the application of full democracy and rule of the law can there be hope for any country to weed out terrorism for all times. Anything short of this will fail sooner or later.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily Sunday accused Syria of being hostile to Jordan because of the Kingdom's endeavours to secure the liberation of its lands and water resources and end the state of belligerence with Israel. Sultan Al Hattab said that Syria is also unjustly accusing Jordan of having certain designs on Iraq, but it forgets its own position vis-a-vis Iraq during the Gulf war. He said that the Syrians have refused to take part in the Amman economic summit under the pretext that it is being attended by an Israeli delegation but Syria is attending the Barcelona conference along side an Israeli delegation. In return, Jordan has been careful not to antagonise Syria and has been facilitating trade with Jordan and Syrian transit trade with the rest of the Arab countries via Jordanian territory, according to the writer. He said that Jordan is not ashamed of making peace with Israel, which has returned occupied Jordanian lands and water resources and which will soon reach a peace treaty with Damascus. The writer expressed hope that Syria will halt its media campaign on Jordan and refrain from fuelling hostile situations in the Arab World.

THE ISRAELI Prime Minister Shimon Peres, is expected to capitalise on the overwhelming public support for his party and his policies following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and is expected to pursue all efforts towards reaching a peace treaty with Syria, said Mohammad Kawash, a writer in Al Dustour. He said that Mr. Peres is keen on presenting new ideas to Washington to secure a speedy settlement over the Golan Heights and secure overwhelming support on the domestic front for the Labour Party to remain in control of Israel's destiny in the coming elections. For this reason, said the writer, Israel has brought forward its timetable for withdrawing its troops from the Palestinian towns and is in a hurry to fulfill the Oslo agreement with the Palestinians so that it will focus its attention on the negotiations with Syria.

Human Rights File

The law has the final say

By Dr. Waleed Sa'di

THE PROTEST march by last week by engineers who claimed to represent the "silent majority," who wanted to speak out against the tyranny of the "vocal minority," brings to the fore once again the issue of what constitutes a majority or minority. Under democratic guidelines, these two criteria can best be determined by the exercise of free vote. Whether the 200 engineers who staged the march were in fact representatives of the other 11,750 thousand engineers who did not join the rally is something that cannot be easily determined one way or another. Had two thirds of the 12,000 strong Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) staged the protest march, then there would not have been any doubt where the majority stand and the answer would have been simple.

On the other hand, the fact that only a minority took to the streets to speak on behalf of their association may not in itself negate the assertion that the majority of engineers are not too happy with the way their professional association is being run, especially when many engineers are situated in other parts of the country and could not have joined the protest. What could be damning to the claim of the so-called silent majority that their views are a faithful reflection of the sentiments of most of the engineers in the country is their free election of independent Islamist Leith Shubeilat, whose posture on several domestic and external issues appears to be anathema to their opinions on such matters. Where were those majority of engineers when the country's engineers cast their votes in favour of a president whose stand on several policy issues was a well known fact all along. The time for the majority to speak out was when they chose their representatives in the association. If the majority of engineers now feel that they have made an error when they elected their representatives in the past, the way to correct that error of judgement is when time is up for electing a new bureau of the JEA. The only other option available to the "rebellious" engineers is to call for an emergency meeting of their general assembly and issue policy guidelines to their elected bureau. This is how the

majority can prove that it is indeed a majority and this is when it can force Mr. Shubeilat and like-minded officials heed their considered thoughts on several fronts.

Even if this dimension of the greater question is resolved one way or another soon enough, the central two-pronged issue would still remain the so-called politicisation of professional associations as well as whether membership in such association can be made mandatory. Obviously, there is no clear-cut answer to these questions. For starters, we may not lump all professions together. There are some professions like the medical and legal which clearly require the establishment of a specialised association to control and regulate the practice of their qualified professionals. There is also an international endorsement of this requirement due to the recognition of the unique nature of some professions.

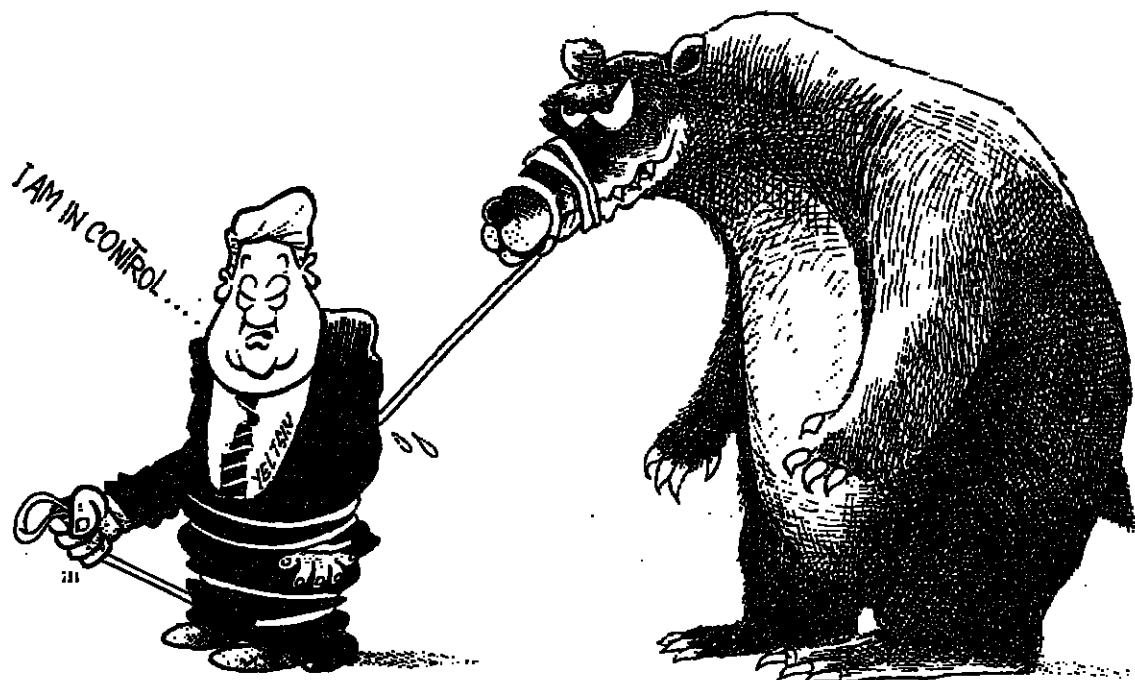
On the other hand, what applies to the medical and legal professions does not necessarily hold true for all other professions, such as the mass media, which clearly do not call for compulsory membership. One can go on and on listing the kind of trades and professions which would need compulsory membership. I am sure many countries would differ on which professions may need compulsory membership and which do not. It must be noted in this regard that whereas people and professionals have a right under relevant international treaty law to organise themselves and form an association, or a union or a club for that matter, people have an equal right not to be forced to join any such organisations. This is a well recognised principle in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international human rights instruments which codified its principles. In other words, mandatory membership must be viewed as an exception to the rule rather than the rule and must therefore be applied and implemented in a very restrictive manner.

As for the right to politicise such unions or associations whether membership in them is a must or not, the first

question that must be resolved is the definition of what constitutes politicisation in the first place. There can be no doubt that under customary international law, which is binding to all of us, groups of people may indeed express an opinion or view on any domestic or external political issue. In this sense, professional association may indeed engage in this kind of political activity. We have seen how the American Bar Association, for example, expressed an opinion on the Vietnam war or on nuclear weapons when these subjects were hotly debated. What associations cannot and must not do, though, is force upon members a certain perspective under the penalty of dismembership. It is one thing for a professional association to state an opinion on a certain policy issue and quite another to impose it on all members. Any such imposition would be outrageous to say the least.

Closer to home, all trade or professional associations have in their by-laws a clear expression of their goals and objectives. These expressed aspirations define their primary activities and put a lid on how far they may go to legislate for their members. This in itself is a major constraint of the first order on the extent to which associations may go in engaging in political affairs, especially if any such engagement purports to adopt legally binding positions. What is even more inhibiting to any such activity is the need to observe and respect the organic law of the land in any political activity. A clear example of what association may not and cannot do is to dismember people who deal with Israel or Israelis in the wake of the peace treaty that Jordan and Israel signed last year. In other words, professional groups cannot outlaw an activity or transaction that has been rendered lawful by national laws. This is where some associations have gone beyond the law and have acted without a doubt in an illegal manner. In this sense, any attempt to penalise a member for acting in accordance with the law of the land but against the directives of the association would be tantamount to what jurists would call an ultra vires practice.

M. KAHIL



Russia's future could well be found in its far-flung provinces

By Ethan B. Kapstein

PARIS — Boris Yeltsin has faced many tests during his presidency, but the greatest is still upon him. The division of political power in Russia between Moscow and the regions remains unsettled and the Kremlin has failed to devise an acceptable solution. Across the country, regional governors are asserting their autonomy. Can Moscow hold onto its so-called federation? Should it?

The answer to these questions is important not just for Russia but for the West as well. Focused on Moscow, Western leaders have little knowledge of the dynamics of local politics in the immense country, with its 89 regions. But this is where Russia's future is being decided.

The devolution of Russian authority is apparent in both the country's economic and political facts. One good measure of the power of a central government is its ability to collect taxes. During the Soviet era, 80 per cent of all taxes collected went to Moscow, while 20 per cent remained in the regions. Today, the reverse is true.

There are also sharp differences in regional attitude toward — and acceptance of — Moscow's economic reform policies. Some areas, like Moscow itself, have benefited tremendously from the transition process. But the capital is hardly representative of Russia. Further, the great income gaps being created across Russia are hardly conducive to nation-building.

On the political level, regional governors — who are some of the ethnic republics call themselves "president" — are claiming increasing autonomy over local affairs. This is especially in the

delivery of social services. Previously, many social services, such as housing, kindergartens and medical facilities, were provided by local, state-owned enterprises that reported to and were financed by their ministries in Moscow. As privatisation proceeds, these enterprises are seeking to transfer their social services to the governments where they are located. While this transfer implies a new financial burden for regional authorities, it is also a source of political power.

Faced with the reality on the ground, President Yeltsin has now accepted the necessity of holding regional elections across the country, whereas in the past he appointed all governors directly.

Russia calls itself a federation, but that does not make it one, and the economic and political facts suggest a different reality. Rather than evolving toward an American-style federal structure, Russia could become a loose "confederation" of regions.

In a confederation, the constituent states themselves are sovereign. These states may then voluntarily establish a central authority with responsibility in such areas as trade, monetary and defence policy. The exemplar of a successful confederation is Switzerland, and the European Union could be described as evolving in this direction. The point is that a confederal structure is not necessarily a bad one. But there are at least two reasons why Russia may not follow this path.

First, the Russian state has been authoritarian for most of its history. Unlike the Americans, who had to build a strong central government from the ground

up, the Russians have suffered through czarist and Communist regimes in which almost all decisions over daily life were made in Moscow. Today, many Russians want a more limited form of government.

Second, with the end of the cold war, Moscow cannot justify the maintenance of a "national security state." The Chechnya war shows just how incompetent the military has become.

What are the implications of this struggle between Moscow and its regions for Russia and the West?

First, it is clear the President Yeltsin's effort to establish a strong "presidential" form of government has failed, as an increasing number of decisions are being made outside of Moscow. To date, Mr. Yeltsin's political strategy has been an ad hoc one of playing regions off one other, with the hope of making Moscow the ultimate victor. It hasn't worked, and the president has begun seeking a new bargain with the regions. That bargaining process should be made transparent, and the Russian Parliament must play an active role. The costs and benefits of alternative political structures need to be debated.

Second, this struggle suggests that Russia will remain a patchwork quilt of a country in terms of economic and political reforms. Some regions will seize every opportunity to liberalise and develop local market economies, while others will remain stuck in the Soviet mud. These regional disparities will themselves, of course, make the task of creating a durable federation all the more difficult, if not impossible, as each governor seeks to carve out exceptions — for better or

for worse — to existing national policies. In this respect, the evolving role of regional parliaments is also an important development to follow. Some have passed or are debating local economic legislation that goes far beyond anything yet adopted in Moscow.

Third, this struggle means that Russia will not pose major military threat to Europe, casting doubts on the need for NATO expansion. Moscow has neither the internal authority nor the appeal to an external threat to marshal a major offensive force.

Fourth, it points up the need for more foreign assistance to be sent directly to the regions. To date, Moscow has reaped windfall profits from foreign aid, and few of the incoming funds are spent outside the "ring road" that defines the city limits. Indeed, millions have probably gone directly to Swiss bank accounts. If foreign donors wish to make a significant impact on the reform process, they will have to concentrate their efforts on those distant regions where Russia's economic future still hangs in the balance.

Finally, and perhaps most important, it means that Western policymakers should get to know their "counterparts" in regional and local governments across the country. One day, these officials may be the leaders of a whole new series of states, established following the breakup of a transitional political entity that was called the Russian Federation.

The writer has recently been appointed director of studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

One year on, Norway thrives outside EU

By Rolf Soderlund
 Reuter

OSLO — A year after rejecting membership of the European Union (EU) oil-rich Norway claims to be one of the few countries to meet the ambitious economic criteria set up by the 15-state bloc.

But in five years booming offshore production will drop and Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland's government has not given up hope of shepherding its intransigent citizens into the EU some day.

Norwegian voters, who rejected membership in 1972, turned their backs on European integration for a second time in a referendum last Nov. 28.

Analysts said it could afford to stay outside the EU for the foreseeable future because of its oil wealth, which is both a blessing and cause for concern. "Unless the oil price drops too much, the next few years will be all milk and honey for Norway,"

Eirik Larsen, senior foreign exchange and money market analyst at Den Norske Bank, told Reuters.

In October, Norway became the world's second largest oil exporter after Saudi Arabia. The state budget will swing into a surplus next year and North Sea revenue is expected to show a high capital flow at least until the year 2000.

The government says it can keep up output of three million barrels per day until the turn of the century, when the giant offshore fields of the 1970s and 1980s end their lives.

Smaller oil fields and natural gas will support Norway into the next century. Oil is expected to dry up in about 20 years, but gas could last 80.

Norway already supplies 10 per cent of natural gas needs in Western Europe and plans to increase production next year.

Norway says that, besides Germany and Luxembourg, it is the only European country to qualify for economic and monetary union (EMU) — except it lacks an entrance ticket.

On the political side, Mr. Brundtland's pro-EU government has lobbied hard for influence in European affairs.

Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal said: "The government has worked actively since Nov. 29 last year, the day after the referendum, to stay in contact as closely as possible with the EU's common foreign and security policy."

"We are now paying more visits to EU capitals than would have been necessary had Norway been a member," he told reporters. "I have been practically everywhere this year."

some European politicians, notably German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, said Norway could not expect any favours now that it had voted "no" for a second time.

"That was the undertone in the first weeks and months after the referendum," Mr. Godal said. "But now they (EU leaders) take Norway for what it is, a founding member of NATO and whose views are of interest. There has been a gradual shift of opinion."

Asked if Norway would apply for membership a third time, Mr. Godal said: "The issue will come up again, but it is impossible to say how long it will take."

Mr. Brundtland said parliament would have to decide if or when Norway would apply again. "But it would not be unnatural if we, at the next crossroads, held a referendum first so the EU knows we mean business before we start membership talks."

Trade and Shipping Minister Grete Knudsen, on a visit to Brussels on Nov. 21, said the main consequence of the "no" vote was that Norway was shut out from forums where formal decisions with direct impact on the country were made.

"In the practical sphere, however, the consequences are perhaps less noticeable," she said.

Norway enjoys the free flow of goods and services with EU members, who represent its main trading partners, through the European economic area agreement.

"The government is now pursuing a fiscal policy that is even tougher than it would have been if we had joined the EU," Mr. Knudsen said. She said Norway aimed to leave a "considerable margin" in fulfilling the Maastricht criteria.

"In the present situation, this will strengthen monetary policy and the exchange rate and thus contribute to keeping interest rates low," Ms. Knudsen added.

Until December 1992, the crown was pegged to the European currency unit (ECU). Now the central bank aims for a broadly stable rate, a so-called fixed float that is neither fixed nor a free floating of the currency.

DNB's Larsen said Norway would probably return to a fixed system once a common European currency is coined under EMU. "It would be natural for Norway to adopt a fixed system again which allows for certain fluctuations against the Euro money," he said.

Finance Minister Sigbjørn Johnsen painted a rosy picture of Norway's economy but said short-term overheating must be avoided along with long-term oil dependency.

Rare Latin inscription also sheds light on Roman army

Another Byzantine church excavated at Petra

By Rami G. Khouri

Special to the Jordan Times

A BRIEF, one-week season of excavations directed by American scholar Patricia M. Bikai has revealed the architectural design and decorative features of a small Byzantine church that had been identified at the turn of the century, but never fully examined until this year. The dig also turned up a re-used stone with a relatively rare Latin inscription, which has shed some new light on the Roman military history of Petra.

The Ridge Church, as it has been named, is located on the hill on the north bank of the ancient city centre, about 160 metres northwest of the Petra Church (with the splendid mosaic floor and valuable papyrus scrolls) that was excavated and restored in recent years by the American Centre for Oriental Research (ACOR). This would have placed the Ridge Church just inside the Byzantine city walls, in the northwestern corner of the city. Due to erosion, possible deliberate dismantling, or re-use of its stones elsewhere, all the walls and other standing structures have disappeared, leaving only the foundation remains.

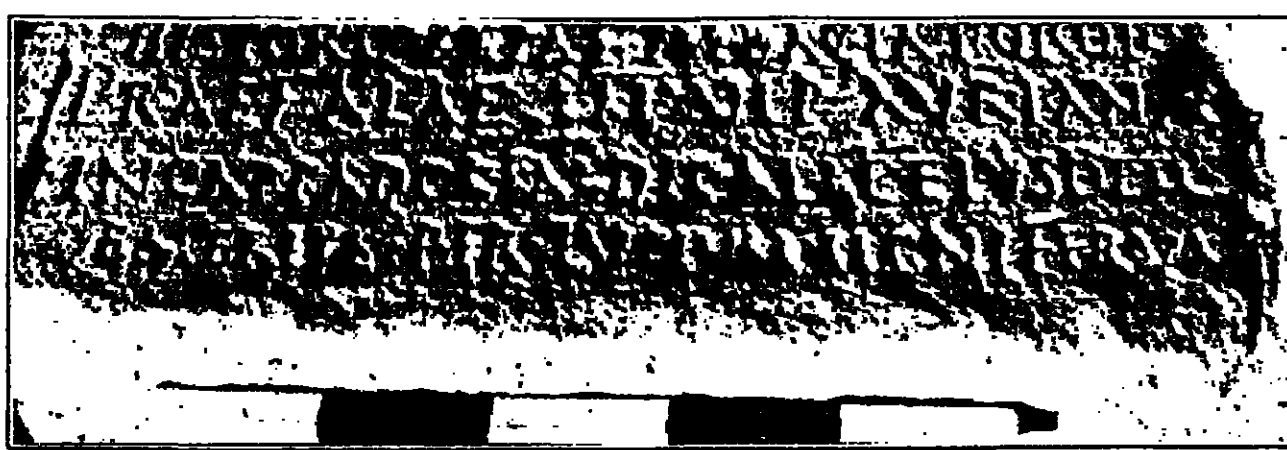
The excavations in October, sponsored by ACOR, revealed a typical Byzantine church with a central nave ending in an apse,

flanked by two side aisles. The main church body measures about 12 x 16.5 metres, with a 2.5-metre-deep portico along its west side. A rock-cut and fully plastered cistern was dug out beneath the western end of the nave, and had its roof supported by three arches. It may have been fed by water via a channel south of the main door which carried water collected from the roof of the building.

Stylobates of five columns each separated the side aisles from the nave, and their eastern and western ends carried pilasters. On the slope south of the church the archaeologists discovered a pilaster capital with vine tendrils decoration, corresponding to the size of the pilaster foundations identified inside the church. The column bases found within the church were re-used from earlier Nabataean/Roman buildings.

The internal layout of the church does not follow any standard Byzantine design system, because the architect obviously had to reconcile the layout with the difficult terrain at his disposal, including bulging bits of bedrock. The two aisles are different widths, for example, and the end of one aisle ends in a raised platform leading to a small room.

The church occupies a raised area of 3.5 x 5



The Latin inscription

metres at the east end of the nave. Stone slabs provided the flooring of the nave and two aisles, and excavation evidence suggests strongly that at one point the floor of the church and apse areas was covered in mosaics made mainly of simple, large white cubes, perhaps with some coloured patterns. There is also some evidence for glass and stone wall mosaics inside the church.

A column inside the portico, in line with the northern stylobate, seems to have helped to support the portico roof. Three steps that lead down towards the west from the portico floor probably extended along the entire width of the facade, and may have also led to nearby cave structures of some sort. One of the steps was made of the upside down

stone with the Latin inscription.

The few material cultural artifacts and architectural elements recovered from inside the church include a miniature sandstone cornice typical of the Nabataean style and with traces of red paint on it, a column drum, mosaic cubes, a few iron nails and fragments of a marble chancel screen or perhaps of an altar or other church furnishings. Some of these items were found together in a corner of the church, suggesting to Dr. Bikai that they were dumped into a natural depression near the stairs in relatively modern times, when farmers levelled the land for agricultural use. This levelling probably destroyed the mosaics of the chancel area.

Dr. Bikai also believes that the church, once it went out of use, was rav-

aged by deliberate defensive actions by the post-Byzantine residents of Petra. Hundreds of water-washed cobbles found in the northwest corner of the excavated area could only have come from the Wadi Abu 'Ullayqa below, she notes. Perhaps, she adds, the stones and many of the church's now-missing architectural elements were used as missiles against hostile attackers who tried to enter Petra through the wadi — the last defensible entry point into the city from the north.

"The destruction of the building," Dr. Bikai told the Jordan Times recently, "thus may have been due to a combination of erosion, deliberate dismantling and agricultural clearing."

A survey of the entire area within 30 metres of the church turned up 45

architectural elements, some of which may not come from the church. There is evidence to suggest that the church was built in more than one stage, and that it may have used walls of buildings from earlier periods. Because of the church's relatively vulnerable, even dangerous, location on the edge of a steep wadi, the excavation has been completely refilled with earth.

There is not enough material evidence to date the church more precisely than from the 5th-6th centuries AD. The pottery sherds collected at the site spanned a very wide time period from the 1st century AD (Nabataean wares) until modern times.

The Latin inscription

The fragmentary Latin

inscription is being studied by Zbigniew T. Fiema, who notes its importance because Latin is relatively rare for ancient Petra. He says that the use of Latin confirms the "official" nature of the inscription and its relatively early date — not later than the 3rd century AD. The text mentions a well known military unit of the Roman army, and may commemorate a military commander already known from other sources, and who may have been a native of Petra.

The text is clearly commemorative in nature, and may have been attached to a statue or some other monument. It seems to have been commissioned by a certain Lucius, the standard-bearer (flag carrier) for a commander of the *Ala II Ulpia Auriana*, an army regiment that was based in Cappadocia (modern Turkey). The term "Ala" designated an auxiliary, all-cavalry unit of the Roman army, comprising 500 or 1000 men on horseback. The specific unit mentioned here, Dr. Bikai explains, was probably raised during the reign of the Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD).

Why would an inscription in Petra mention an army unit far away in Turkey? The explanation may come from a second, Greek inscription found in Petra three decades ago, men-

tioning a certain M. Ulpianus Andromachus, a commander of the same unit whose junior officers had honoured him by erecting a statue of him in Petra — probably meaning that he was a native of the city. It is possible, Dr. Bikai suggests, that the church inscription is yet another honour for the same fellow, but by his standard-bearer rather than his officers. The person honoured was clearly of an equestrian rank (a knight). The Ridge Church was probably described by the explorer Aloise Musil just after the turn of the century, and was definitely identified on a map of A. Kammerer in 1929. It was again identified in 1994 by Thomas Dailey of USAID and ACOR director Pierre Bikai, and was briefly examined and probed that year as a preliminary effort to this year's wider project. Excavations were relatively unencumbered because the church foundation remains were only covered in about 20 centimetres of earth. The excavation was sponsored and funded by the American Centre for Oriental Research in Amman. The assistant director was Virginia Egan and the architect was Pierre Bikai. Conservation work was undertaken by Na'if Zaban, and most of the workers were provided by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities.

Partnerships in focus at Barcelona meeting

(Continued from page 1)

those who will stress to his European counterparts that terrorism is not an exclusively Arab phenomenon even though Islamic extremist movements are a principle source of radicalism.

Within the context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership initiative, the EU has already concluded association agreements with Tunisia as well as Israel, which has also signed an agreement on research and development with European states.

The EU is now finalising a similar agreement with Morocco, and it is hoped that similar agreements will be finalised with others before the end of 1996.

According to EFE, the EU's negotiations with Jordan are less advanced than those with Egypt, but the objectives are the same, namely, increased liberalisation of the industrial sector and more agricultural exchanges in return for higher financial assistance from the EU.

Preliminary discussions towards association agreements have been held with Lebanon and Algeria, while talks with the Palestinian National Authority and Syria will be held at a later stage.

The conference will be attended by the foreign ministers of the 15 EU states as well as Morocco, Algeria,

Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Palestinian National Authority, Turkey, Cyprus and Malta.

Among the 14 ambassadors who are invited as observers at the conference are those from the United States, Russia, Slovenia, Albania, Saudi Arabia and Bulgaria. The Mauritanian ambassador has also been invited as an observer.

AFP adds: Israel and the eight Arab countries clashed head on over political and security issues despite Europe's insistence that the conference here is not the place to air the Middle East's problems.

Syria, which backs guerrillas fighting Israel's occupation of South Lebanon, wants to distinguish between terrorism and resistance against foreign occupation.

The Palestinian delegation, headed by Yasser Arafat, is demanding the conference to recognise the right to self-determination as part of its campaign for an independent state.

Arab states also want the meeting to call on all countries to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which Israel has consistently refused to do.

The Arab delegations — Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the

Palestinians, Syria and Tunisia — met several times at the weekend to forge a joint stand.

"We feel that Arab countries are trying to force concessions on Israel and we will not allow it," Israeli diplomat Alon Bar said Sunday.

"The amendment on terrorism that Syria has proposed we see even as provocation. If we start talking about issues like this we could go on forever."

"This conference is trying to lay the cornerstone of a building. If we can't even agree on this, then we will never build cooperation," said the Madrid-based diplomat.

The conference, which groups the Arab countries, Cyprus, the 15 European Union countries, Israel, Malta and Turkey is agreed on the creation of a free trade zone in the Mediterranean by 2010, one of the main aims to be announced in the final declaration on Tuesday.

But Europe has met resistance from some southern Mediterranean countries over attempts to tackle its security concerns in the region like immigration and its insistence that an economic partnership requires political and cultural reform in its future partners.

"There will be no Euro-Mediterranean zone if there is no cultural dialogue or security," Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana told the press Sunday.

The conference is not a meeting of "donors or creditors," he stressed, but a forum for "future partners."

Iraq demands U.N. deadline

(Continued from page 1)

mission a quick success," but added his visit was taking place in a "positive climate."

Mr. Sahaf also said Iraq was ready to "study new ideas" on applying U.N. Resolution 986, which would allow it to sell up to \$1 billion worth of oil per quarter to buy food and medicine, but only under strict U.N. control.

Rights report denounced

Iraq on Sunday denounced a new U.N. report on Human Rights in the country as biased and branded its author, former Dutch Foreign Minister Max van der Stoep, a "tool in the hands of America."

"This man is not neutral. He is not objective. He is biased," said Salah Al Mukhtar, editor-in-chief of the government newspaper Al Jumhuriya.

Mr. Mukhtar told Reuters that Mr. Van der Stoep was not more than "a tool in the hands of America" and that the Iraqi government found no "objectivity in what he writes."

Mr. Van der Stoep, a special rapporteur or investigator of the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Commission, accused the Iraqi government on Friday of holding its own people hostage by refusing to sell oil to buy urgent humanitarian needs.

Baghdad-based diplomats say Iraq is seeking a compromise formula with the United Nations.

Police question two rabbis

(Continued from page 1)

Channel two television said more rabbis had received summons to appear before investigators this week.

Police spokesman Eric Bar-Chen declined to comment on the inquiry. Amir shot Mr. Rabin at close range after a peace rally in Tel Aviv on Nov. 4. His brother and seven others are being held in connection with the assassination.

A rabbi in the occupied West Bank, Yoel Bin-Nun, has charged that right-wing rabbis had issued a death edict against Mr. Rabin for endangering Jewish lives by giving away West Bank land to the Palestinians.

Police said meanwhile a young Israeli woman played an active role in Mr. Rabin's murder by trying to help arm the assassin and putting him in touch with an explosives expert.

The police representative at Petah Tikva court charged that Margalit Har-Shefi, 20, who was arrested Nov. 15, gave assassin Amir information about the arms stocks at her West Bank settlement of Beit El, near Ramallah.

She wanted to help him to steal weapons and ammunition to kill Mr. Rabin and

also to attack Palestinians, police told the court, which remanded her in custody for another six days.

The young woman is also suspected of giving Amir the name of an "engineer" who could help him make time bombs.

She faces further charges of helping Amir and his brother Hagai of finding them the right clothes to be "inconspicuous" in a crowd.

The clothing was to help Amir get close to Mr. Rabin at the Tel Aviv peace rally where the murder was carried out as well as then Foreign Minister Shimon Peres who was also targeted.

Har-Shefi is also suspected to have known in advance about the plans to kill Mr. Rabin as well as other plans by Amir to kill the late prime minister in the months before the assassination.

A plea from her lawyer Yair Golan for Har-Shefi's immediate release was refused. The lawyer said she had always refused to help Amir and had "not taken his threats seriously."

Har-Shefi is a law student at the religious university of Bar Ilan in Tel Aviv, where Amir also studied.

Israel 'awaits' Syrian reply

(Continued from page 1)

at the beginning of next week, to discuss boosting bilateral ties with the Egyptian president and relaunching the peace negotiations with the Syrians," he said.

Mr. Mubarak made his first trip to Israel since coming to power in 1981 to take part in the state funeral for Mr. Rabin in West Jerusalem on Nov. 6.

Mr. Barak told the Arab economic daily Al Alam Al Yom, published in Cairo on Sunday, that he would establish "strong ties" with his Egyptian counterpart, Amr Mousa.

"This is particularly important because Egypt's role in the realisation of peace is vital and necessary, and the entire world knows the eminent role of the president" of Egypt, Mr. Barak was quoted as saying.

Mr. Peres is to put forward

a detailed plan for peace with Syria when he visits the White House on Dec. 11 for talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

A senior Arab League official on Sunday attacked Mr. Barak for proposing that the Jewish state annex parts of the West Bank.

"Ehud Barak has started off in his post with declarations which confirm that he is only a defence minister in civilian clothing repeating extremist slogans," Assistant Secretary General Adnan Omran told journalists.

Mr. Omran charged that Mr. Barak had taken up "the same language of the extremists who killed Yitzhak Rabin."

Mr. Barak, a former armed forces chief-of-staff, said Thursday that Israel should maintain a civil and military presence in the Jordan Valley and annex other parts of the West Bank.

Hamas softens its tone

(Continued from page 1)

excuse for foiling reconciliation talks and said that Hamas detainees were charged with incitement to kill PLO officials and trying to destabilise self-rule areas. It said Hamas was placing unacceptable preconditions, such as the release of Sayed Abu Musameh, a Hamas leader, before talks begin.

The PNA cracked down on Hamas following a series of suicide attacks in which scores of Israelis were killed. At the same time it maintained a dialogue with the group hoping to turn Hamas's violent opposition into political channels.

Dr. Zahar said that a Hamas delegation from Gaza and the West Bank visited some Hamas detainees in PLO prisons.

Some prisoners were released and we are awaiting the release of Sheikh Sayed Abu Musameh and Sheikh Ahmad Nimr," Dr. Zahar said.

PLO security officials said here Abu Musameh was tried in the PLO's military court and sentenced to two years in prison for incitement. Mr. Nimr, a hardline mosque preacher, was arrested last week after delivering a sermon in which he called for killing PLO officials for making concessions on land to Israel.

Meanwhile the Islamic Jihad movement, another opponent of the self-rule deal, vowed to pursue holy war against Israel until "doomsday," it said. It would boycott Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The movement reiterates its rejection of participating in the (self-rule) authority or running for elections which are the product of (Israel-PLO) peace deals," it said in a statement.

"Our fate is continuing holy jihad (war) until doomsday and no capitulation agreements will stop us," Islamic Jihad said.

Hamas also has called on Palestinians to boycott the elections but the Islamic National Salvation Party, a recent offshoot of Hamas, said it would participate in the poll.

Israeli officials said Israel has boosted security at offices around the world as an end to 40 days of mourning for Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shakaiki, killed by suspected Israeli agents, approaches.

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GCC oil refiners eye growing Far East demand

DUBAI (R) — Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are expanding and upgrading their oil refineries and petrochemical plants to capture a booming market in the Far East for petroleum products, a senior GCC official said Sunday.

The six Arab Gulf states want to take advantage of surging Far East demand in the next 10 years and remove the disparity between their oil reserves and modest refining industry.

"Oil producers of the Gulf region are moving methodically to close the gap between production and refining capacity," Anwar Abdullah, director of the GCC's department of oil and gas, told delegates at an energy conference in Dubai.

The GCC's Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman own over 70 per cent of world oil reserves and produce 13.5 million barrels per day (b/d) of crude oil.

But their refineries can process less than three million b/d, or four per cent of total world refining capacity. Gulf producers are chasing the extra income that is possible

by refining more crude and exporting better quality products after investment in their own domestic refineries or by securing stakes in overseas refineries.

Arab states are expected to invest \$22 billion by the year 2000 to boost capacity in their domestic oil refineries and petrochemical plants, according to Mr. Abdullah.

"Saudi Arabia is setting the pace for the downstream market as the world oil market experience a major transition back to a fully integrated industry," said Mr. Abdullah.

Saudi Arabia has already secured downstream stakes in the South Korean and Philippine market in addition to marketing outlets in the United States and Europe. Talks with China and Japan on downstream cooperation are being pursued.

The UAE and Kuwait are also working to improve the efficiency of their domestic refineries as well as entering downstream joint ventures abroad, Mr. Abdullah said.

The trend in GCC states for integration, where an oil producer has a guaranteed refining and marketing outlet for its crude output, is led by

expectations of rising product demand both in overseas and domestic markets.

Demand for oil products in the Far East will be led by transport fuels, gasoline, jet and diesel which are expected to post an annual growth rate of 3.5 per cent, Mr. Abdullah said.

Even with planned increases in Asia-Pacific refining capacity there will be a product shortfall of 1.2 million b/d at the end of the decade, which could rise to a massive four million b/d by 2010, according to Mr. Abdullah.

Most of this shortfall is expected to be met by additional and upgraded refinery capacity in the Gulf.

Already the refining industry in the Far East and the Middle East is being stretched to meet higher demand and tougher environmental regulations on permitted product specifications.

"There is ample fuel available but not enough cracking capacity to produce the lighter fuels that are now required," Mr. Abdullah said. "The GCC requires assistance from the consuming world in the form of investment and demand management guarantees," he said.



A Chinese job-seeker looks at jobs advertised on a bill board while a worker Saturday pastes up more new leaflets on the board in downtown Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong

province. The booming economy in Guangdong province attracts thousands of job-seekers from neighbouring provinces (Reuters photo)

Experts doubt Beirut's ability to regain key financial status

DUBAI (AFP) — Leading economists meeting in the United Arab Emirates Sunday cast doubts on Beirut's ability to regain its position as a Middle East finance centre, saying Dubai is better placed for this position.

"Realistically, it will be sometime before international investors feel comfortable in Beirut," said Sir William Purves, chairman of the British Bank of the Middle East.

"If the peace process moves a bit faster, uncertainty will disappear," he added. "Given the progress of Dubai, investors will look first to Dubai before Beirut," he told Arab businessmen.

Britain's former chancellor of the exchequer Lord Lawson said Dubai had the advantage of looking east at a time when the world's growth centre of gravity was shifting east.

"There will be only room for one financial centre in this region. It depends on political stability, technological advance and entrepreneurial ingenuity," he said.

Lebanon's government has launched a multi-billion dollar project to rebuild Beirut city centre, destroyed by the 1975-1990 civil war, and to make it "the City of the Middle East," in a reference to London's financial district.

Vietnam plans to export surplus labour

HANOI (AFP) — Vietnam plans to send some 100,000 workers abroad every year starting in 1996 to help ease domestic unemployment, the Vietnam News Agency has said.

The country exported a mere 4,500 workers in the first six months this year, mostly in the building and merchant navy sectors, it said.

The Czech Republic, Japan, South Korea, Laos,

Libya and other countries in the Middle East have been the main destinations for the workers. Some 40 state-run Vietnamese firms manage labour exports.

Although Hanoi hopes to promote labour export as a way of checking growing unemployment, there is concern over the conditions workers face abroad. Many of them are underpaid, ill-treated and even physically abused.

Iran unveils austerity budget

TEHRAN (AFP) — President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani unveiled an austerity budget Sunday, saying U.S. sanctions against Iran had caused economic difficulties but the government was taking measures to counter them.

Mr. Rafsanjani, presenting the draft budget for March 1996-1997 to parliament, provided fewer figures than in previous years but gave the impression that budgets envisaged for most sectors would be austere.

He proposed a state budget of \$4.390 billion riyals (\$31.08 billion), a 28 per cent increase on last year but a drop in real terms given the official inflation rate of 56 per cent over the last 12 months.

The general budget, including the entire nationalised economic sector, registered a growth of 43.8 per cent to around 138,000 billion riyals.

The U.S. sanctions, introduced in June after Washington accused Iran of supporting international terrorism, have mainly affected Iran's ability to produce oil, which is the country's main source of hard currency, according to most Western experts in Tehran.

Mr. Rafsanjani put the country's oil production capacity at 3.9 million barrels per day (b/d), which is significantly below the 4.2 million b/d figure provided earlier by officials.

The president, however, anticipated that the level of output would be raised to 4.25 million b/d next year.

Cubans to experience new woe — the taxman

HAVANA (R) — Well-to-do Cubans will have to pay personal income tax on hard currency earnings starting next year, according to details unveiled Saturday.

The move, bringing an end to the exemption from taxes since the early years of the country's 1959 communist revolution, appears aimed in part at countering increasing disparities in income.

The new taxes "permit a just redistribution of income to finance social programmes that benefit the population," a finance and prices

trade union agreement. "Another 10 per cent on top of that seems to me excessive," said the union, who asked not to be named.

Several Cubans also questioned the government's ability to extract taxes in an economy where many earn dollars through unofficial activities.

"There's a mass of Cubans earning dollars who won't declare their earnings, one peso-earning activity," said.

Cubans earning dollars, such as those in the tourism or emerging private sector, are often vastly better off than those earning pesos, and far less susceptible to chronic shortages of staples such as

earning hard currency, which excludes dollar remittances from abroad, establishes a scale from 10 per cent taxation for people earning less than \$2,400 up to 50 per cent for people earning more than \$60,000 a year.

According to the ministry, dollar earners will have 60 days from Dec. 31 to make a sworn statement on their finances.

Apart from Cubans who earn hard currency in sectors such as tourism or the arts, more than 100,000 Cuban workers in key industries such as the ports, electricity and mining receive a small hard-currency bonus on top of their peso salary.

It was not clear whether these bonuses, which are sometimes as little as \$15 a month, would be taxed.

Other tax announced Saturday and also due to come into force from January is a tax on boats from recreational yachts to cargo ships applicable both to Cubans and to vessels registered in Cuba.

Saturday suggest ordinary Cubans will be less than de-

state-run El Aljibe

earnings

industry under a

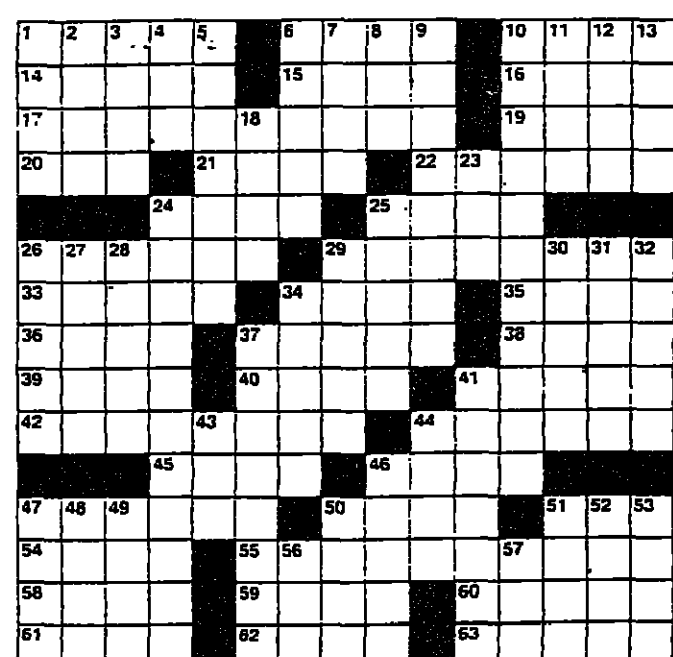
Daily Crossword by George Urquhart

ACROSS
1 Bears coach, once
6 — the Red
10 Perlman of "Cheers"
14 Certain poet
15 R — James "loved"

3 Succor
17 Evergreen State
19 — podrida
20 Historic period
21 Whittish
22 Walk feebly
24 Gaffer
25 Lay off
26 Grave crime
29 Love poem
33 Audibly
34 — to the Chief
35 Store event
36 2-wheeled vehicle
37 Transport by boat

38 Strung instrument
39 Greenland base
40 Concerning
41 More reasonable
42 Trend
44 People of good breeding
45 Wings
46 Duck's milieu
47 Table setting item
50 Hairless
51 To the rear, on a ship
54 Margarine
55 Golden State
58 FBI, e.g.
59 Verve
60 Last
61 Israeli dance
62 Palm fruit
63 English dramatist

DOWN
1 Inventor Elias —
2 Jewish month

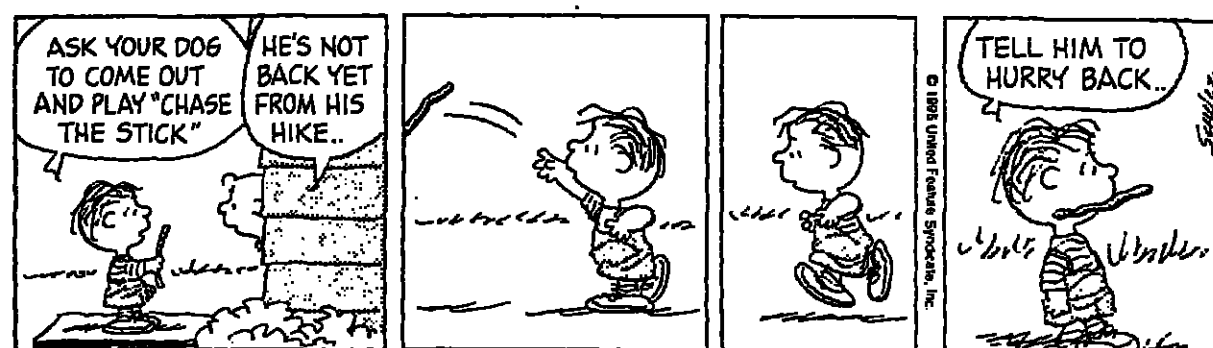


Yesterday's puzzle solved:

SHOD STEER RAVE
COPE A ROSE ERIN
ALICE TUNIES DALL
MEINAGIS PEEPIED
RUE'S BOIXY
MIERLIN LANICELOT
ONION BURISA APR
DIEC EVANGEL CII
ORE VIERGE IREINE
COITEGEIS ABASIED
I RIES ABUT
ARIMLET PARAGON
BIEAT A FLAT TAME
CLAIRE TRIAGE APEX
SPIED EASIED TIENT

41 Farewell celebration
43 Inventor
44 Whitney
45 Couples game
46 Common Sense author
47 Snack
48 Counterenior
49 Fruit
50 Utter without thinking
51 — Domini
52 Command
53 Story
56 Pie — mode
57 — de Janeiro

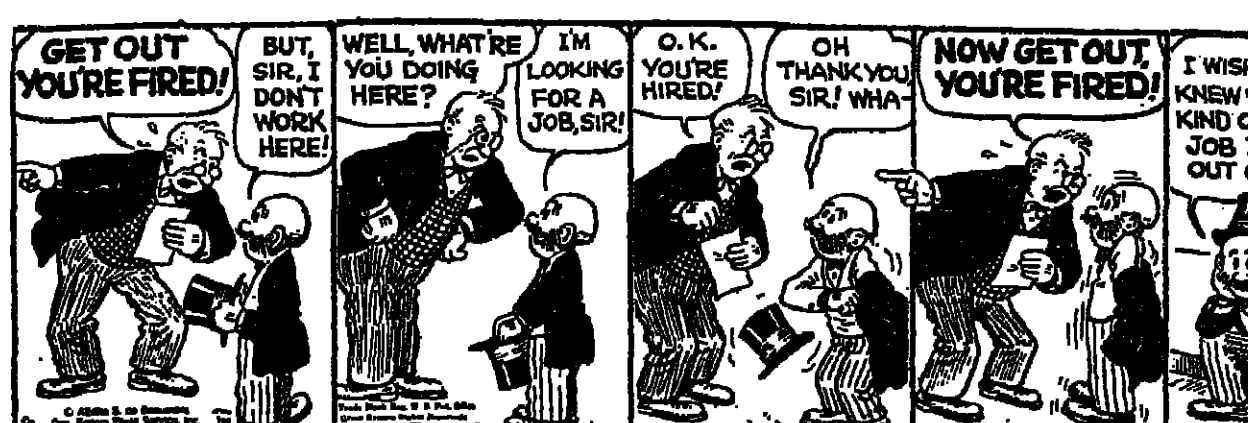
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt 'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be sure to follow instructions of higher-ups and get right results. In the evening today, do seek out extra data for an important new project.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Find a better system for handling time now plan you have in mind today and do seek the advice of fellow associates for their expertise.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can handle business matters well during the day today with persons who are

cultures. MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Use particular care with clauses in any contracts with fellow associates and come to a fine agreement, though difficult to do.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you plan your career activities wisely early today, they will go along smoothly and you get much accomplished. Be wary of what others say.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan something interesting for the latter part of the week, but don't take any unnecessary chances. Avoid added expenses.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day today to make conditions at home much better in many ways, but don't take any risks there tonight. Avoid disagreements.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) State to fellow associates what you most want and gain their cooperation during the daytime today. Tonight, steer clear of gossip.

SAGITTAR: (November 22 to December 21) You can apply yourself vigorously today and gain more of life's goodies. Confer with an expert or ideas on an important project.

CORN: (December 22 to January 20) Good friends can be most supportive in the morning today, but don't go to a higher-up for favours in the afternoon or there could be difficulties.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get busy planning the days ahead early in the day today, then spend your time with your family and enjoy home pleasures.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get your goals clear in your mind and then you understand better how to go after them and gain them for the benefit of your loved ones.

Birth time of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

J.E.S. Engineering Services, INC (A World Wide American Company) is interested in meeting with the wholesalers from Jordan and the surrounding countries that are interested in importing the following items:

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China, Bulgaria lead world CD piracy, industry says

LONDON (R) — Copyright pirates plunder \$2.5 billion a year from the world's record industry and one in four albums is now counterfeit, the industry's watchdog chief said Friday.

Compact Disc (CD) piracy is the fastest growing threat. China and Bulgaria are accused of being the biggest counterfeiters.

"CD piracy is a time bomb

which could stop the multimedia revolution dead in its tracks," said Mike Edwards, director of operations of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry.

"CD piracy remains the greatest single threat facing the record industry today," he told an international conference.

Mr. Edwards, whose federation battles counterfeiting in 70 countries, said the value of CD piracy could top \$1 billion for the first time in 1995.

He reckoned that piracy worldwide, ranging from backstreet bootleggers making scratchy tapes to organized crime syndicates laundering money, robbed the recording industry of \$2.5 billion. That is 6.5 per cent of

total turnover.

"The major sources of our problems, although not the only ones, are Bulgaria and China," he said of CD piracy.

Bulgaria now has the capacity to manufacture up to 10 million CD's a year with the biggest plant being the Military Research Centre at State Zegora, he said.

"Bulgaria remains a major threat with most of the counterfeit product being exported to western Europe," he said.

"I personally find it outrageous that a country in receipt of billions of dollars of development funds should be permitted blatantly and on an increasingly large scale to continue to steal the assets of the donor countries," he said.

He said China now has over 30 CD plants compared to just three in 1992. Local demand is for about five million CD's but they have a combined capacity of 75 million.

"Despite the undertakings made by the Chinese government in settling the trade dispute with the U.S. last year, this situation has not improved," he said.

"Counterfeit CD's continue to pour into Hong Kong and from there to markets throughout the world," he added.

Federation agents raided a shopping complex near the Guangzhou railway station near the Hong Kong border and seized one million CD's ranging from the Beatles to Michael Jackson.

Founders sign documents to launch the Islamic Insurance Company

☆☆ FOUNDERS OF the Islamic Insurance Company, new public shareholding company under establishment, have signed the articles of associations and the internal regulations as a first step towards launching the institution with a JD 2 million capital. The founders will cover 50 per cent of the capital and the remaining shares will be floated for public subscription. Mousa Shehadeh, head of the founding committee, said three Islamic insurance companies, from among 11 new insurance companies, have sought to operate in the Jordanian market after the issuance of new regulations. He added that the idea of setting up Islamic insurance companies emerged about 10 years ago and an application was submitted at the time but the laws did not allow establishing new companies. After the issuance of the new regulation, the idea was revived and the application was renewed, Mr. Shehadeh said. He indicated that the main customers of the company would be importers of goods and cars which are imported or financed by the bank in addition to people who would like to deal with Islamic insurance. Mr. Shehadeh said non-Muslims would be welcome as shareholders and clients. Main founders of the company are the Jordan Islamic Bank, the Arab Islamic Insurance Company (UAE), the Islamic Insurance and Reinsurance Company (Bahrain) and many other Jordanian and Arab investors. Ahmad Sabbagh has been chosen as general manager (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

Insurance companies may pay JD 1m for damages in Aqaba

☆☆ JORDANIAN INSURANCE companies are likely to pay between JD 700,000 and JD 1 million as their share of compensation for damages suffered by some hotels in Aqaba as a result of the earthquakes which hit the region. This event will press insurance companies to take the necessary steps to collect premiums against earthquakes. Such premiums, which will amount to about 400 fils per JD 1,000 of coverage, have been demanded by reinsurance companies (Al Aswaq).

Traders stop importing beef

☆☆ MAIN IMPORTERS of beef have decided in a sudden move to stop importing beef due to the increase in their prices at the countries of origin where governments cancelled 30 per cent of subsidies given to meat exports. In addition, transport costs had increased from 80 cents to \$1 per tonne. The importers say a kilogramme of beef costs JD 2.500 (Amman delivery) whereas the price fixed for selling to retailers is JD 2.000. The importers have requested the Ministry of Supply to reconsider the prices in light of the new costs and transportation charges (Al Aswaq).

RJ carries more passengers, cargo

☆☆ ROYAL JORDANIAN (RJ) carried 1,079,476 passengers during the first 10 months of this year. The figure represents 3.5 per cent growth over the same period of last year. Seat occupancy was 66.3 per cent compared to 65.9 per cent during the first 10 months of 1994. The airline carried 55,243 tonnes of cargo, 24.5 per cent more than the volume carried during the same period of last year. According to the planning department, the highest growth was on the routes to the U.S., Arab Gulf states, Canada and the Far East. The fleet had a total of 49,846 flight hours, 3.2 per cent more than the 10-month period in 1994 (Al Ra'i).

SCRUPLES

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 26/11/1995			
SECURITIES NAME	NO. OF SHARES	MARKET PRICE	CHANGE
ARAB BANK PLC	340	54095	132.000 225.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1250	5432	4.372 4.353
BANK OF JORDAN	125	455	1.622 3.620
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	350	628	1.433 4.432
THE HOUSING BANK	2700	11643	4.422 4.273
JORDAN ADVANTAGE BANK	125	599	2.722 2.655
JORDAN CITY BANK	47500	53203	1.172 1.116
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	3780	12070	1.429 3.396
UNION BANK FOR SAVINGS & INVESTMENT	52000	200430	1.933 3.794
SUSTAIN BANK	12130	122736	1.429 3.396
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	4700	15773	3.422 3.353
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	15550	14306	1.930 1.920
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4745	7871	1.930 1.846
BANKS SECTOR			
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	100	265	2.652 2.652
AL-BAYR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	50	230	4.022 4.022
INSURANCE SECTOR			
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	31406	49824	1.562 1.563
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2950	5185	1.790 1.752
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONGRESS HOTELS	250	512	1.153 2.052
AMMAN HOTEL FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	14000	4439	3.272 3.170
ZARQA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	3800	4072	1.262 1.250
ORTON LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	1750	1646	1.962 1.943
SERVICES SECTOR			
ATANKER CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	1250	1520	1.562 1.563
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	3813	13509	3.562 3.530
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	1000	2960	2.962 2.960
THE ARAB POTASH	803	1860	4.870 4.850
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	445	4223	9.122 9.052
JORDAN TANNING	3225	24605	7.422 7.485
THE JORDANIAN COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	800	1612	1.362 1.360
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	726	9312	1.962 7.250
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	1800	7740	4.562 4.300
JORDAN DAIRY	307	768	2.852 2.800
DAIRY INDUSTRIES	1000	2175	1.162 1.170
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	700	4444	6.652 6.650
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	30250	154888	5.120 5.130
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	4350	5789	1.362 1.340
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	500	970	2.032 1.930
INDUSTRIAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1750	1680	1.972 1.960
INDUSTRIAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	800	812	1.460 2.050
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	600	2280	1.852 3.802
JORDAN SULPHUR-CHROMIUMS	230	300	1.210 1.200
ARAB CENTRAL FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	944	1695	1.762 1.770
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	4250	12656	3.020 2.970
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	1250	2213	1.762 1.770
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	25019	32969	1.320 1.330
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR			
GRAND TOTAL	140452	324167	INDEX NUMBER: 118.77
			CHANGE: -0.711
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET: 126602			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET: 147631			

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	Nov. 17, 1995	Nov. 24, 1995	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5433	1.5000	-1.08 %
Deutsche Mark	1.4071	1.4198	+0.88 %
Swiss Franc	1.1365	1.1450	+0.57 %
French Franc	6.8483	6.8785	+0.62 %
Japanese Yen	102.15	101.50	-0.64 %

* USD Per 100

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	1-Month (%)	3-Month (%)	6-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.08	5.87	5.81	5.43
Sterling Pound	0.56	0.50	0.69	0.44
Deutsche Mark	3.81	3.75	3.82	3.68
Swiss Franc	1.91	1.81	2.00	1.81
French Franc	5.50	5.45	5.16	5.06
Japanese Yen	0.36	0.53	0.28	0.50

* Percentages based on 100 U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Nov. 17, 1995	Nov. 24, 1995
U.S. Dollar	0.7180	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.1047	1.1022
Deutsche Mark	0.4911	0.5016
Swiss Franc	0.6196	0.6227
French Franc	0.1451	0.1458
Japanese Yen*	0.0068	0.0061
Dutch Guilder	0.4456	0.4478
Swedish Krona		
Italian Lira*	0.0444	0.0446
Belgian Franc		

* Per 100

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World Weightlifting Championship

Chemerkin wins heavyweight category

GUANGZHOU, China (R) — Russian Andrei Chemerkin put his massive 158-kilogramme frame to good effect on Sunday to win the battle of the heavyweights in the World Weightlifting Championships.

He won the overall title in the over 108-kilogramme category — the final event of the nine-day tournament. But Chemerkin's bulk counted against him in both the snatch and clean and jerk.

Both he and Ronny Weller

of Germany snatched 197.5 but Weller, almost 50-kilogramme lighter than his rival, took the gold because International Weightlifting Federation rules favour the lighter lifter.

It was a similar story in the clean and jerk. Both

Chemerkin and Australian Stefan Boter lifted 245-kilogramme, the gold going to Boter.

Chemerkin took the overall gold with a 442.5-kilogramme total compared to Weller's 440-kilogramme.

Final medals table

Men							
	Gold	Silver	Bronze				
Greece	6	4	1	Georgia	0	0	1
Russia	5	8	4	Madagascar	0	0	1
China	5	5	6				
Turkmenistan	5	3	4				
Cuba	3	0	1				
Germany	2	1	0				
Ukraine	2	1	0				
Australia	1	0	2				
Hungary	1	0	2				
Bulgaria	0	3	2				
Kazakhstan	0	1	3				
Armenia	0	1	2				
South Korea	0	1	0				
Belarus	0	0	2				

Women

China	16	8	1
Taipei	6	5	9
India	3	6	0
Hungary	1	3	2
Colombia	1	2	0
Bulgaria	0	2	6
Nigeria	0	1	0
Greece	0	0	4
Finland	0	0	3
South Korea	0	0	2

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British jockey Michael Roberts riding German horse Lando (right) waves to fans while crossing the finish line to win the \$3.8 million Japan Cup horse race at Tokyo racecourse on

Sunday. Japan's Taiki Blizzard, 4th, jockeyed by Yukio Okabe seen on the back (Reuters photo)

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

HEAR THE OPENING LEAD

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
 ♠ Q 7 5
 ♥ A J 3
 ♦ Q J 4
 ♣ K J 10 2

WEST
 ♠ J 10 4
 ♥ 9 2
 ♦ A 8 5 2
 ♣ A 9 6 3

EAST
 ♠ 9 8 6 3 2
 ♥ 9 8 5
 ♦ 7
 ♣ Q 8 7 4

SOUTH
 ♠ A K
 ♥ K Q J 10 7 4
 ♦ K 10 9 6 3
 ♣ A 5

The bidding:
 SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
 10 Pass 3NT Pass
 30 Pass 3NT Pass

Opening lead: ?

We have often remarked on Terence Reese's classic statement: "There are no blind opening leads. Just deaf opening leaders!" There are always some inferences that can be drawn from what was bid and what was not.

North's jump to two no trump showed a balanced hand of 13-15 points. South introduced a second suit and, after North showed three-card heart support, continued to four hearts. What would you lead?

What can be learned from the auction? Since South had no slam ambitions, it was more than likely that the diamond suit was five cards long. Why would South risk a diamond ruff and, therefore, having to contract for an 11-trick game, with only four diamonds and a relatively balanced hand?

Next, North's jump to two no trump showed that the diamond suit was guarded. North almost surely had at least three diamonds, and four was not impossible. Hence, it was highly probable North-South had at least eight diamonds between the two hands, and West was looking at four more. That left East with no more than one diamond. The winning defense was now obvious.

West led the ace of diamonds and continued with the three, showing an entry in the lower-ranking side suit, in this case clubs. East ruffed, returned a club to the ace and scored another diamond ruff. Declarer was down one almost before play had started.

Women's skiing events cancelled

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta (R) — International Ski Federation officials and local race organising committee members on Saturday pulled the plug on two re-scheduled women's World Cup technical races due to excessively soft snow caused by unseasonably warm temperatures.

The first official giant slalom of the 1995-96 women's calendar had been originally scheduled for Saturday with a slalom set for Sunday.

The two races were pushed back to Sunday and Monday by officials due to the warm weather. But it became apparent on Saturday that the courses would not hold up to the rigours of the technical races and the safety of the racers might have been compromised.

"After three hours of consideration this morning, we have made the decision to cancel the giant slalom and slalom," said race organising committee Chairman John Cassels.

"The decision was reached after a long deliberation. The fundamental consideration is safety. The track is simply too soft."

"We were promised cold weather which hasn't yet arrived. That was complicated by the new snow — a foot of new snow this morning alone — heavy wet snow," said Cassels, who added that officials felt the course would have broken up after only about 10 racers.

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CINEMA TEL: 677420 CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
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CONCORD "2"
Sylvester Stallone ...in ASSASSINS
Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15

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Lee shines as Newcastle stretch lead

LONDON (AFP) — England midfielder Robert Lee led a spirited second-half fightback as Newcastle extended their Premiership lead to six points with a pulsating 2-1 victory over Leeds on Saturday.

Brian Deane's 31st minute header put Leeds — the last side to win at St. James' Park — into a shock lead, boosting second-placed Manchester United's hopes of drawing level on points with victory over Nottingham Forest on Monday.

But two goals in a minute from England stars Lee and Peter Beardsley sealed the points for Kevin Keegan's men and maintained their unbeaten home record.

Midfielder Lee's sixth goal of the season, a surging run followed by a raking 20-yard shot nineteen minutes from time was followed up a minute later by Beardsley's close-range strike to complete a remarkable turnaround.

Keegan, singled out Lee for particular praise, saying: "When the last England squad was announced somebody said in the national press that Rob Lee wasn't good enough, but I think he's the best player in the country at the moment," said Keegan.

"There's no defender playing better, nor a midfielder, and I haven't seen a striker having so much influence on a lot of games."

"If you want to know how well he's playing, just ask anybody who has played against him this season," he added.

Middlesbrough, who lost their unbeaten home record to Tottenham in midweek, claimed their first Premiership win in five matches at home to Liverpool, who have now picked up only one point from their last four games.

Full-back Neil Cox gave Boro a flying start with his second minute goal after

good work from Juninho.

Neil Ruddock equalised for Liverpool in the 63rd minute but Nick Barmby sealed victory with the winner, less than 60 seconds later.

It was Juninho's first win in the Premiership since his arrival from Sao Paulo and he is quickly becoming a folk hero on Teesside.

Boro manager Bryan Robson said: "Juninho was class in the first half and he was behind a lot of our moves."

Everton celebrated striker Duncan Ferguson's return to Goodison by rallying from two goals down to snatch a point in their most dramatic home game of the season.

The Scottish international, released Friday from a Glasgow prison after serving half of a three month sentence for head-butting an opponent, was given a hero's welcome as he saluted the fans from the touchline before a thrilling match.

But Sheffield Wednesday striker Mark Bright did his

best to spoil the party with two first-half headers, before Russian star Andrei Kanchelskii and Nigerian Daniel Amokachi struck back for Everton.

But the most frenetic match of the day was at Highfield Road where Coventry survived two sendings off to draw 3-3 with Wimbledon.

Coventry were gifted the lead when goalkeeper Paul Heul punched the ball into his own net but self-styled hardman Vinnie Jones levelled from the penalty spot following Paul Williams' dismissal for deliberate handball.

Further strikes from Jon Goodman and Oyvind Leonhardsen seemed to have secured Wimbledon's first win in two months but Dion Dublin pulled a goal back and, despite Richard Shaw's dismissal for his second bookable offence, David Rennie equalised with seven minutes left.

Martinez seals Fed Cup title

VALENCIA (R) — World number two Conchita Martinez of Spain wrapped up the Fed Cup for Spain for the third successive year on Sunday with a 6-3 6-4 victory over America's Mary Joe Fernandez in the first reverse singles.

Martinez, who complained of neck pain on Saturday after her hard-fought 7-5 7-6 victory over Chanda Rubin, appeared slow and stiff around the court at first and dropped an early service game in both sets.

But her powerful forehand brought her the points she needed under pressure and her victory gave Spain an unbeatable 3-0 lead following Arantxa Sanchez Vicario's 6-3 6-2 win over Fernandez on Saturday.

8 killed in Indian cricket stadium collapse

NAGPUR, India (R) — At least eight cricket fans were killed and 50 injured when a stadium wall gave way on Sunday as crowds were leaving for lunch during a one-day international between India and New Zealand, police said.

Stadium officials said a portion of the back wall on the second level of the eastern stand at the Vidarbha Cricket Association (VCA) stadium collapsed as spectators were making their way out during the lunchtime intermission.

"At one moment I saw the wall, in the next I saw several people falling down," said Joseph Rao, a journalist on the Nagpur Times.

Three spectators were killed immediately and another five died in hospital, the officials added.

Police at Nagpur in Maharashtra state in central India said at least 15 of the injured were in a serious condition.

Witnesses said a 10 foot (three metre) wide section of the brick and mortar wall appeared to give way in the crush of people trying to leave the top level of the stand, which seats up to 3,000 people.

Some of the victims fell over the edge as the wall collapsed, plunging some 50 foot (15 metres) to the ground, while others were hit by falling debris.

The area around the base of the stand where the wall collapsed with blood and littered with bags and personal belongings.

More than 100 people had been perched on the wall

during the match which was watched by more than 45,000 people.

Ambulances rushed the injured to the local Mayo Hospital in Nagpur.

The match, the fifth one-day international between India and New Zealand in the Kiwis current tour, continued despite the tragedy after the customary 45 minute break for lunch.

"There would have been a riot if we had suspended play," a VCA official told Reuters.

New Zealand finally won the game by 99 runs.

The stadium is due to host one of the 1996 World Cup cricket matches, between Australia and Zimbabwe on March 1, and the eastern stand had only recently been completed.

Loko keeps Paris St. Germain on track

PARIS (Agencies) — Paris St. Germain went seven points clear at the top of the French league on Saturday night, trouncing Bordeaux 3-0 as second placed Auxerre crashed 2-1 at home to 10-man Guingamp.

Patrice Loko, who had a spell in a psychiatric clinic earlier this year after a highly-publicised "night of madness" in Paris, proved he is back to his best by scoring twice.

Loko needed just two minutes to get off the mark, stooping to head home Vincent Guerin's rifled cross into the box, and then bundling home the second from a corner soon after the re-start.

Three minutes later, he worked a one-two with Rai which finished with the Brazilian rattling home PSG's third and his 11th of the season.

Substituted for Pascal Nouma towards the end, Loko left the pitch to rousing applause from the Parc des Princes crowd.

Auxerre, who had the best attack, and Guingamp, who had the best defence, met for a showdown which turned

Auxerre's way in the 36th minute, when Guingamp defender Vincent Candela was sent off.

But the underdogs battled away and got their reward after 57 minutes when Stephane Carnot opened the scoring from close range.

Carnot also chipped in the second, after Charles-Edouard Condon had waltzed past three defenders in the penalty area, and Guingamp clung on for their win after Bernard Diomede headed home in the 77th minute for Auxerre.

Former leader Metz and reigning champions Nantes finished up with a goalless draw, leaving Metz level on points with Auxerre.

Barcelona held at Real Sociedad

Barcelona could see their week-old lead at the top of the Spanish first division threatened after being held a 1-1 draw at Real Sociedad on Saturday in a scrappy game affected by rain.

A powerful shot by Oscar Garcia put Barcelona ahead just before the break and

Johan Cruyff's team had the opportunity to increase their lead early in the second half.

But Real Sociedad fought back to equalise through Inaki Idiazek only seven minutes from time.

Josep Guardiola received his second yellow card and was sent off for protesting to the referee over a non-existent offside in the Real Sociedad goal.

Stand-in libero Juerjen

Oviedo and Zaragoza to find out if they are to remain league leaders.

Dortmund stretch lead

In Bonn, depleted German first division leaders Borussia Dortmund rode their luck on Saturday to win 2-0 at lowly Uerdingen, extending their lead to three points and their unbeaten run to 12 games.

Stand-in libero Juerjen

EUROPEAN SOCCER

Guardiola had captained Barcelona in the absence of Jose Maria Bakero, who was not picked by Cruyff.

Barcelona must now wait to see how Atletico Madrid and Espanyol, whom they lead on goal difference, fare in their home games against

Kohler popped up to score a rare goal for the Bundesliga champions in the 66th minute, converting a free-kick from midfield general Andy Moeller. Captain Michael Zorc sealed matters with a penalty kick five minutes later.

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NBA replacement referees turn fashion police

NEW YORK (R) — The NBA's replacement referees turned fashion police on Saturday.

In the latest bizarre side-effect of the league's contract dispute with its locked-out union referees, the great debate at Madison Square Garden concerned New York Knicks forward Charles Oakley's shirt.

That was just the first of a slew of events involving the minor-league replacement referees that turned a game between two of the NBA's top teams into a farce — or a tragedy, from the Houston Rockets' viewpoint.

Halfway through the first quarter of New York's 103-88 win over the two-time defending champion Rockets, referee Rodney Mott assessed a delay-of-game technical foul against Oakley for standing at the foul line with his shirt allegedly not tucked in the way league rules require.

Oakley had argued that his shirt was tucked in but bagging loosely over the belt line.

"His shirt wasn't out, it was just loose," coach Don Nelson explained after the game. "Oak likes a loose shirt, and as long as the shirt wasn't out of his pants, I thought it was a mistake on the referee's part."

"That was crazy," said Knicks centre Patrick Ewing. "The shirt was in. It held up the game for no reason at all."

Nelson called a 20-second timeout to calm the situation with some minor theatrics.

"I called a 20 and pretended like I was tucking the shirt in to pacify the referee. But I really didn't, because it was in."

The whole issue was funny to Nelson after the victory, but he pointed out: "That play could have cost us the game."

The New York fans had fun with the situation, too, loudly pointing out every flapping Houston shirt. Backup centre Mark Bryant was a particular target, and midway through the fourth quarter referee Bruce Bell quietly told him to tuck the shirt in. He complied, a quizzical look on his face.

But the Rockets found nothing funny about the refereeing.

Forward Robert Horry was ejected early in the fourth quarter from a still-tight game for a questionable flagrant foul. He and Charles Smith went crashing out of bounds after the foul, but it did not appear he was trying to hurt the New York forward.

Referee Mott saw it differently. "A flagrant foul 2 is an automatic ejection," he said.

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SUPPORT FOR ARMY: Sri Lankan children play cricket beside a man drawing a massive posture in Colombo proclaiming victory for security forces fighting Tamil rebels in the north of the country. Hundreds of such posters have come up in the Sri Lankan capital and other key towns congratulating the troops as they remained poised on Sunday for a final assault on the rebel stronghold of Jaffna (see inside) (AFP photo)

Israeli dart shells kill one in Lebanon

NABATTYEH, Lebanon (R)

Israeli gunners firing anti-personnel shells that spray steel darts killed one guerrilla and wounded five in South Lebanon, security and hospital sources said on Sunday.

They said Israeli tanks fired 30 "flechette" (dart) shells, around midnight at the guerrillas near Kfar Tibnit village facing the border buffer zone occupied by Israel in South Lebanon.

It was not known if the guerrillas — who belong to the Amal Movement — were trying to infiltrate into the Israeli-held border buffer strip.

Amal said in a statement in the south that one of its fighters was killed and a number were wounded in an overnight clash with an Israeli patrol in the Arnoun-Kfar Tibnit area.

A Reuters reporter said several Kfar Tibnit homes facing the area of the bombardment were peppered with steel darts. The dead guerrilla was badly mutilated, he added.

Film shot by a Reuters television cameraman showed a two-storey Kfar Tibnit house with one wall peppered with scores of black steel darts.

Officials with UNIFIL, the U.N. peacekeeping force in South Lebanon, say the shells are banned under a 1949 Geneva Convention on warfare and they have in the past protested to Israel against their use in South Lebanon, especially against civilians.

The Israeli army said its troops killed an Amal guerrilla and wounded three.

"Last night an Israeli force on an operation in the eastern sector of southern Lebanon identified a terrorist squad and the Israel defence forces unit opened fire on them," an army spokesman said.

On Sunday, Israeli warplanes rocketed hills in Iqtim Al Tufah controlled by the Hizbullah group.

Cairo presses arrest campaign against Muslim Brotherhood

ASSIUT, Egypt (Agencies)

Six members of the banned Muslim Brotherhood were arrested in the south Egypt province of Assiut on Sunday for distributing "militant literature," police said.

The Brotherhood members were arrested in a mosque in Assiut town, 385 kilometres south of Cairo, where they were preparing to distribute tracts from the Gamaa Islamiyah extremist group to school pupils, police said.

The Brotherhood has claimed that a police crackdown against it aims to wreck its chances in parliamentary elections to be held Wednesday.

Last Thursday, 54 Brothers were sentenced to up to five years in prison for forming a secret organisation to impede the constitution.

Although the group, which was banned in 1954, says it has renounced violence, government officials accuse it of supporting militants waging an armed campaign against the state.

Egypt's main human rights organisation has asked President Hosni Mubarak not to endorse the verdicts and sentences of the military court against Brotherhood leaders.

The Egyptian Human Rights Organisation (EOHR), in a statement received on Sunday, also asked the president to have the prisoners freed or retried in civilian courts.

The Brotherhood leaders, all civilians, were found guilty of political crimes such as running an illegal group, holding secret meetings and preparing anti-government leaflets.

"The EOHR appeals to the president... to abstain from ratifying the rulings issued by the supreme military court and to take the necessary measures either to release the defendants or to retry them before civil judges," the statement said.

The New York-based organisation Human Rights Watch/Middle East made a similar appeal and added a request for political reform in Egypt.

"We call upon President Mubarak to open, rather than narrow, the political space in Egypt, and to permit members of the Islamist political trend to participate fully in public life and to carry out peaceful political activities without harassment," the organisation said in a statement.

The two groups gave detailed objections to the procedures in the military courts and to the principle of using them against civilians. The government prefers the military courts because they tend to give quick and favourable verdicts.

The military court on Thursday sentenced five of the Brotherhood members to five years in jail and 49 to three years. Twenty-seven others were acquitted.

The sentences do not become final until Mr. Mubarak ratifies them. Those convicted have three weeks to ask for clemency but there is no appeal procedure.

Meanwhile members of Al Jihad admitted they planned to bomb Cairo's Khan Al Khalili bazaar, popular with tourists, the official Egyptian news agency MENA said Sunday.

During interrogations, 36 members of a group discovered in Cairo with a car ready to carry 150 kilograms of explosives, admitted to "preparing to destroy the bazaar in Khan Al Khalili to destabilise the country," it said.

Business seeks voice in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian business has put big money into Wednesday's parliamentary elections to assure its voice in pushing through a radical programme to privatise the country's sluggish economy.

"The money that they have given to this campaign totals in the billions of Egyptian pounds," Salaheddin Hafez, editor in chief of the country's largest newspaper, Al-Ahram, told AFP.

"Magnates even wanted to create a fund of 50 million pounds (\$16 million) to back candidates of their choice," Mr. Hafez said.

"Businessmen are a rising and prosperous force. It's normal that they seek to have an influence in parliament, which will be looking at a large number of laws to move

the country from a state economy to a free market," Mr. Hafez said.

There are no firm numbers on the number of business people who have stepped forward as candidates in the race, but political experts put them at up to 200.

More than 4,000 candidates are running for 444 seats in the People's Assembly. After the Nov. 29 vote, the president will name 10 more to fill out the 454-member house.

"The 1995 campaign is marked by the entry of two forces into the contest: the Islamic movement and businessmen, who are making their presence known and openly defy both the ruling party and the opposition," Mr. Hafez said.

Even if they run under

different parties, business people have a common interest: 20 years after Egypt first began privatisation in 1974, they still complain of a climate that is adverse to investment and seek radical change in economic legislation.

"There must be a firmer hand to go forward towards a real market economy," said Munir Fakhr Abdul Nur, a candidate for the liberal Wafd Party and the representative in Egypt for the French foods company Vitrac.

"The government must reduce taxes on business to encourage investment, dismantle the current bureaucracy and improve infrastructure," Mr. Abdul Nur said.

Verandas around the square, above a sea of orthodox men in their traditional black coats, black hats, flowing beards and sidelocks.

Women had to stand apart in narrow side streets leading to the main square and also fell to weeping and asking forgiveness for their sins.

"For so many people to come together like this shows that we are suffering greatly," said one woman, who had pushed her baby in a pram to the protest.

Several rabbis took the prayers and addressed the crowd in Hebrew and Yiddish. Once the prayers were over, they fell silent as the tones of two religious ceremonial horns pierced the air.

The rally was mostly peaceful but scuffles broke out when the organisers tried to stop a photographer taking pictures on the stage erected at the front of the square.

Orthodox leaders have also organised a series of demonstrations at the Modiin site.

Experts call for new strategy to counter corruption in Jordan

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Corruption in Jordan will increase unless legislation and monitoring mechanisms are developed to enable the judicial and legislative authorities to deal with new forms of corruption, participants in a seminar said Sunday.

They said the "new forms of corruption" were emerging due to open market economy and the involvement of multinational organisations in the country.

In the opening session of the seminar, entitled "Towards Strategy to Resist Corruption," Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said that corruption in Jordan was a fact and was handled badly in the past.

"Journalists and columnists have generalised corruption and do not exclude anyone," Mr. Rawabdeh said.

During the last five years, as a result of ineffective legislation, the number of corruption cases presented to court dropped from 21 in 1991 to six in 1995.

"Jordanians have stopped informing the authorities of corruption because no deterrent verdicts were issued in 1990 when nine major corruption cases, which involved high-ranking officials, were presented to Parliament," said Judge Mahmoud Ababneh.

None of the officials were taken to court, and all papers were filed away, he added.

The two-day workshop was organised by the Ministry of Administrative Development and Ministry of Justice in which officials from the government and private sector as well as journalists are participating, will discuss the role of the media, judiciary, legislative and administrative institutions and bodies that monitor corruption.

Minister of Justice Hisham Tal said that fears that corruption would increase in Jordan were legitimate.

"We have to adopt a comprehensive strategy to fight corruption in both the private and government sectors," Mr. Tal said.

Minister of Administrative Development Muhideen Touq said that although corruption was considered a sensitive issue in Jordan, developing a strategy to eliminate it was extremely important because corruption stands in the way of development.

Taher Hikmat, a former minister of justice, said that corruption usually flourishes during transition periods from martial laws to democracy.

Therefore, he added, that it is extremely important to combat corruption through adopting administrative and legal measures which should be applicable first of all to ministers and high-ranking officials as well as businessmen.

"Corruption is an international phenomena, but it is especially concentrated in developing countries because accountability and legislation are not strongly rooted," Mr. Hikmat added.

In the year 1994, 11 cases of embezzlement were presented to court, said Judge Ababneh. But only two people were convicted and the rest were acquitted due to lack of evidence.

It is essential to establish a criminal department that falls under the jurisdiction of the judicial authority to fight corruption, said Judge Ababneh. He added that the proposed department should have the authority to monitor all corruption cases in the different sectors as well as in the privatisation process.

Former Aquino aide, family held hostage

MANILA (AP) — A former spokesman of president Corazon Aquino was held hostage with members of his family until he was able to withdraw money from an automatic teller machine to pay the gunmen, it was reported Sunday.

But Teodoro Benigno said he believed the gunmen actually were trying to deliver a message that he should "not go too far" in his writings when they broke into his house late Friday. "I think they were on a mission to frighten me and possibly kill me if I resisted, but I did not provoke them," he said.

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Russian defence minister to visit Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev is to make his first trip to Israel on Thursday, the defence ministry said Sunday. Mr. Grachev will stay from Nov. 30 to Dec. 5 as the guest of Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who also holds the defence portfolio, the ministry said in a statement. He will be accompanied by senior officials from the Russian Defence Ministry and will be received with a "full military ceremony, (and) a guard of honour." Mr. Peres and Mr. Grachev will meet for talks and he will also be briefed on the peace process which Russia co-sponsors with the United States.

Iran to take delivery of third sub in 1996

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is to take delivery next year of the last of three submarines it has purchased from Russia, a navy official said Sunday. The navy's deputy commander, Abbas Mohtaj, said a delegation was in Russia to prepare for the transfer. Iran has already bought two of the Kilo-class conventional submarines from Russia, provoking fears among the Arab states across the Gulf and the United States that the Islamic republic is rearming itself after the debilitating effects of the 1980-1988 war against Iraq. The delivery of the third submarine has already been announced several times but postponed each time for financial reasons. Mr. Mohtaj also announced that the navy and the air force had begun missile-launching exercises in the Sea of Oman, south of Iran. The manoeuvres, dubbed Lightning-4, mark navy day in Iran, which is celebrated on Tuesday. Mr. Mohtaj said the Iranian navy would conduct joint manoeuvres with Pakistan in the Sea of Oman early 1996 and then with the Sultanate of Oman in the "near future."

Experts call for new strategy to counter corruption in Jordan

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Corruption in Jordan will increase unless legislation and monitoring mechanisms are developed to enable the judicial and legislative authorities to deal with new forms of corruption, participants in a seminar said Sunday.

They said the "new forms of corruption" were emerging due to open market economy and the involvement of multinational organisations in the country.

In the opening session of the seminar, entitled "Towards Strategy to Resist Corruption," Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said that corruption in Jordan was a fact and was handled badly in the past.

"Journalists and columnists have generalised corruption and do not exclude anyone," Mr. Rawabdeh said.

During the last five years, as a result of ineffective legislation, the number of corruption cases presented to court dropped from 21 in 1991 to six in 1995.

"Jordanians have stopped informing the authorities of corruption because no deterrent verdicts were issued in 1990 when nine major corruption cases, which involved high-ranking officials, were presented to Parliament," said Judge Mahmoud Ababneh.

None of the officials were taken to court, and all papers were filed away, he added.

Orthodox Jews curse 'grave-robbers'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Thousands of ultra-orthodox Jews protested here Sunday against what they called the desecration of ancient burial sites by archaeologists unearthing the ruins of a 2,000-year-old village.

Some 25,000 people, mostly men, attended the demonstration held in the centre of the Mea Shearim ultra-orthodox district of Jerusalem, said police, who sealed off all roads to the area.

But a threat to issue a curse on Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein was dropped, military radio said.

For more than two hours rabbis read prayers and chanted before the crowd. With Torahs in their hands, they fell to weeping and wailing in lamentation for the excavations on what is considered holy ground.

"We are very sad because they have taken away the bones of the people who were buried there," said one young Jew, who asked not to be identified.

Earlier this month archaeologists found tombs bearing Hebrew inscriptions and a reference to the Hasmonian Jewish dynasty dating from the 1st century B.C. to 70 A.D. at the West Bank site, close to the town of Modiin in Israel.

The tombs have been removed by the archaeologists for protection.

But according to Jewish tradition, if a body is removed from its grave it prevents the dead person from entering the world to come after the arrival of the Messiah.

A rabbi at the rally speaking through loudspeakers denounced the archaeologists as "grave-robbers" and called for God "to punish them by cutting off their legs and arms."

Security was tight as police vans and border guard jeeps blocked entry to the roads, and barriers were thrown up to stop passers-by.

State radio reported earlier that a group of 10 rabbis would carry out a prayer to

curse Mr. Rubinstein. Known as the Pulsa Denura, the Aramaic for "lashes of fire," it is the most terrifying of curses in Jewish mysticism.

The education minister has ordered the digs to continue and said he was not worried by the curse, which was uttered against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in October, a month before his assassination.

"The curse which some orthodox people have pronounced against me is not targeted at me, but is a dangerous battle against Zionism, democracy and the State of Israel. Such words could light the touch-paper of a powderkeg of violence."

He said the digs were legal and would continue as they were "important" for the history of the Jewish people.

Military radio said the curse was not pronounced during the Mea Shearim rally. It had been a publicity stunt to try and attract as many people as possible.

Posters showing the ancient site were hung from

verandas around the square, above a sea of orthodox men in their traditional black coats, black hats, flowing beards and sidelocks.

Women had to stand apart in narrow side streets leading to the main square and also fell to weeping and asking forgiveness for their sins.

"For so many people to come together like this shows that we are suffering greatly," said one woman, who had pushed her baby in a pram to the protest.

Several rabbis took the prayers and addressed the crowd in Hebrew and Yiddish. Once the prayers were over, they fell silent as the tones of two religious ceremonial horns pierced the air.

The rally was mostly peaceful but scuffles broke out when the organisers tried to stop a photographer taking pictures on the stage erected at the front of the square.

Orthodox leaders have also organised a series of demonstrations at the Modiin site.

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Kwasniewski to take a week's holiday in Spain

WARSAW (AFP) — Polish President-Elect Aleksander Kwasniewski is planning to take a week's holiday in Spain, Polish television said citing unofficial sources. His choice of Spain as a holiday destination comes as no surprise after he made repeated references during his presidential campaign to his Spanish counterpart, Felipe Gonzalez, as a political role model for a nation in transition. Mr. Kwasniewski's press office would not reveal the exact dates or venue for the holiday, or whether he would meet with Mr. Gonzalez or other Spanish leaders. Outgoing President Lech Walesa has been holidaying with his family in his native Gdansk in northern Poland.

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The two-day workshop was organised by the Ministry of Administrative Development and Ministry of Justice in which officials from the government and private sector as well as journalists are participating, will discuss the role of the media, judiciary, legislative and administrative institutions and bodies that monitor corruption.

Minister of Justice Hisham Tal said that fears that corruption would increase in Jordan were legitimate.

"We have to adopt a comprehensive strategy to fight corruption in both the private and government sectors," Mr. Tal said.

Minister of Administrative Development Muhideen Touq said that although corruption was considered a sensitive issue in Jordan, developing a strategy to eliminate it was extremely important because corruption stands in the way of development.